

# Footprints



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

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## Cover Photo



*Photo by Sister Janet Haverkamp*

# Footprints

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This assembly titled, "Imagining Leadership in a Global Community," was attended by nearly 700 leaders of Catholic sisters, including the Dubuque Franciscan Leadership Team.

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Nine Franciscan Associates were commissioned in September.

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Upcoming events at the Canticle of Creation Center and Shalom Spirituality Center.

A message from

# Leadership

A mission statement for an organization explains the purpose of the organization and its values. The Sisters of St. Francis mission statement, “Rooted in the Gospel and in the spirit of Saints Francis and Clare, the Sisters of St. Francis will live in right relationship with all creation.” One way that we, the Sisters of Saint Francis, have chosen to live this mission statement has been the approval of five corporate stances since 1983: Nuclear Disarmament, Sanctuary, Immigration Reform, Human Trafficking, and the Earth Charter. In approving a corporate stance we publicly state that we will take action, personally and communally, in response to these issues. These five stances are concrete ways of living our mission particularly through our three commitment areas: “deepen our relationship with Mother Earth and Sister Water,” “stand with persons who are poor,” and “make peace and practice nonviolence.”

We are called to take these stances based on our founding documents. From the Third Order Rule of St Francis: “The sisters and brothers are called to heal the wounded, to bind up those who are bruised, and to reclaim the erring.” (30) From the Constitutions of the Sisters of St. Francis: “As a pilgrim congregation responding to the needs of the times and impelled by the urgency of the mission, we minister in and with the church through a variety of works which further the reign of God in human life and social structures,” and “In all of our ministries, we express the tradition of our foundress (Mother Xavier Termehr) as we seek peace and reconciliation among people, reverence for all of creation, stewardship of God’s gifts, and joyful celebration of life itself. Thus we provide present and future generations with reasons for living and hoping.” (15)

This issue of *Footprints* presents the history of each corporate stance and how each remains relevant in today’s global society. As followers of the Gospel, Francis, and Clare we are to be authentic witnesses to what we believe and profess. “This is who we are; this is what the global community can expect of us.”

--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

Sister Cathy (Kate) Katoski  
*President*

Sister Marie Cigrand  
*Vice President*

Sister Mary Lechtenberg  
*Vice President*

Sister Kathy Knipper  
*Vice President*





*Sisters, Associates, and Friends gather at a prayer service for World Refugee Day in 2016.*

# Corporate Stances Respond to the Needs of the Time

*by Sister Michelle Balek, OSF*

As we enter autumn, there are many signs that Mother Nature gives to alert us to the change in seasons. In response, we pull out our sweaters and do other tasks to ready ourselves to meet the cooler days and the earlier darkness. Our society gives off many signs, too, of urgent needs and injustices. A Corporate Stance is a public statement or action made by the congregation and/or associates to address an issue of human concern, social impact, or structural injustice in society or church. This is one way we join our individual voices and actions together to place greater focus and communal efforts on a current issue. The procedure of coming to such action necessitates study of the issue and prayerful discerning of our response based in Gospel values and who we are as Franciscans, encouraging each sister and/or associate to make a personal supportive

action in response. Since 1983, the Dubuque Franciscans have enacted five corporate stances, each responds to a unique sign of the time.

## **Nuclear Disarmament - 1983**

Many incidents over several decades composed the context leading up to the importance of this issue in 1983. In July of 1957 an autonomous international organization known as The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was formed to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy and to inhibit its use for military purposes. Throughout the ensuing decades they have been called on to assist in verifying nuclear capabilities and disarmament.

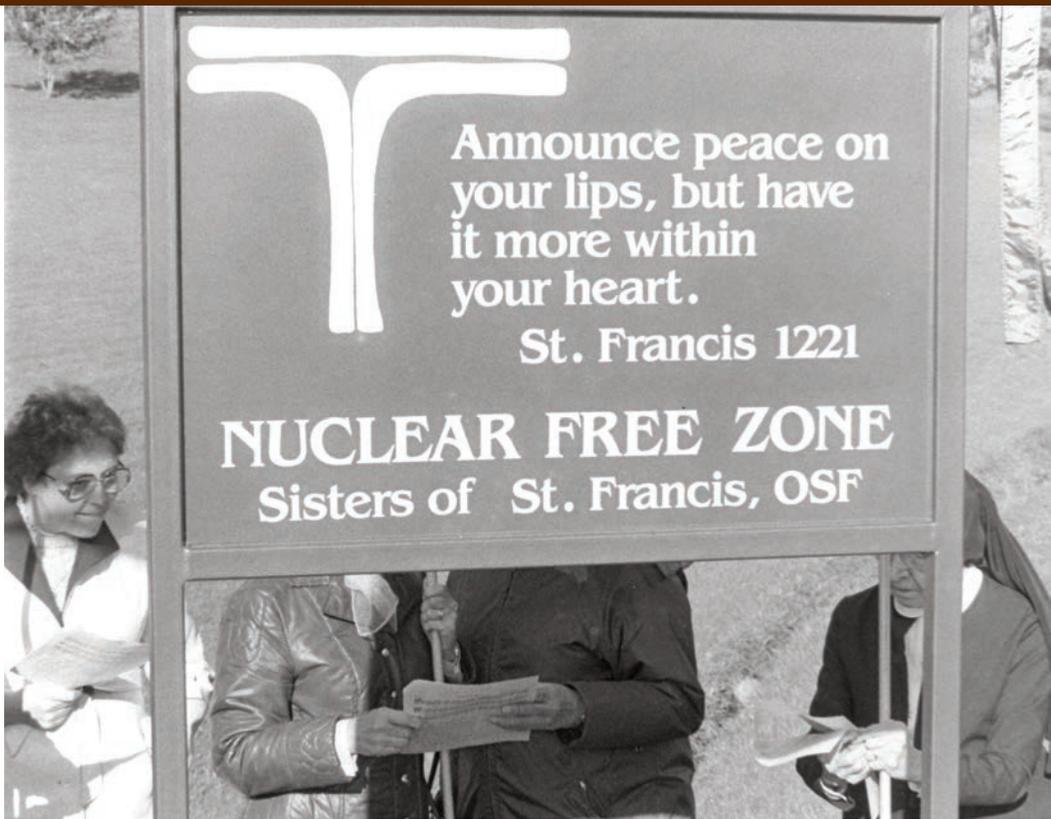
In spite of the 1963 Test Ban Treaty, nuclear testing continued. The focus of this treaty was about limiting nuclear fallout rather than actual

disarmament by prohibiting testing in the air, space, and water. Between WWII and 1983 there were 1,762 nuclear tests done worldwide. These were conducted mainly by the U.S., Russia, and the U.K., though later in this period, France, China and India were also conducting these tests.

In the 1970s there were several treaties relating to limiting and decreasing nuclear weapons. In March of 1970 the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty entered into force, creating nuclear weapons states (NWS) and non-nuclear weapons states (NNWS). The five NWS countries, including the U.S., committed to pursue general and complete disarmament, while the NNWS countries agreed to forgo developing or acquiring nuclear weapons. Only South Sudan, India, Israel, and Pakistan were non-signatories. According to this treaty only the five NWS could have nuclear weapons as they had “manufactured and exploded a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device prior to 1 January 1967.” India, Israel, and Pakistan were known or suspected of having nuclear weapons. To join the treaty they would need to dismantle their weapons and put their nuclear materials under international safeguards. Iraq called on the nuclear powers for assistance in building a nuclear reactor for peaceful purposes in accord with the non-proliferation treaty, after its three were destroyed by an Israeli attack in 1981 and by the U.S. during the 1991 Gulf War.

In March of 1979 the Three Mile Island nuclear accident, with its partial meltdown of the reactor that leaked radiation, raised many safety and health concerns for more people, regarding the use of any nuclear energy. In December of that year, NATO made a two-fold decision to deploy, by 1983, new long-range nuclear forces in Europe and to enter into arms control negotiations with the Soviets about such forces. This deployment created alarm and there were many protests throughout Europe and North America. By June of 1982 a Nuclear Disarmament Rally was held in New York City’s Central Park. It drew about one million people, including 22 Dubuque Franciscans, in support of the Second United Nations Special Session on Disarmament. In 1983 the U.S. deployed cruise missiles to the UK and President Reagan introduced SDI, the Strategic Defense Initiative, known as “Star Wars” meant to intercept and prevent a nuclear missile attack.

During this time, Dubuque Franciscans were actively engaged in educating themselves and taking



*Sisters bless the Nuclear Free Zone sign installed in October of 1986.*

action on these issues. They sponsored speakers, attended rallies, demonstrated and held workshops on the U.S. Bishops’ Peace Pastoral and on nonviolence. They participated in and collaborated with various programs and organizations--local, national, and international--such as the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR), NETWORK, Fellowship of Reconciliation, Ground Zero Week, Firebreaks War and Peace Game, Pledge of Resistance, and Beyond War.

The original statement from 1983 called upon the U.S. government to take meaningful unilateral and multilateral initiatives toward nuclear disarmament. In response, sisters pledged actions such as prayer and weekly fasting, participating in peace groups, educating for peace and responding to NETWORK alerts. Over the next years, sisters participated in national and local peace walks (**Sister Dorothy Marie Hennessey** did the Great Peace Walk of 3,300 miles started in March 1986), workshops on nonviolence, civil disobedience, attended speakers and conferences on this issue, as well as advocated for legislation for disarmament. At the special General Chapter held in 1986, the congregation declared Mount St. Francis as a Nuclear Free Zone. This was introduced and promoted by the ACJ (Dubuque Area Committee on Justice), and a sign was installed on the Mount St. Francis property in October of that year.

#### **The Current Reality**

Between 1984 and 2018 there were 294 nuclear tests done worldwide. While the number of these tests has decreased immensely since 1983, Pakistan

## Nuclear Disarmament

*Because of our reverence for life, we, the Sisters of St. Francis of Dubuque, Iowa, voice our condemnation of nuclear arms and pledge individual and corporate action toward total nuclear disarmament in our nation and in the world. As the United States has been the first to take other initiatives of world leadership, we call upon our government now to take meaningful unilateral and multilateral initiatives towards nuclear disarmament.*

*Specifically we ask that the U.S. government:*

- 1. Declare that this nation will never use nuclear weapons on a first-strike basis;*
- 2. Put into effect a unilateral moratorium on the production, testing, and deployment of nuclear weapons and delivery systems, and implement this moratorium through a series of initiatives;*
- 3. Refuse to appropriate funds for nuclear weapons;*
- 4. Take practical steps towards peace conversion alternatives;*
- 5. Invite the Soviets and all nations having nuclear arms to match U.S. efforts.*

In 2010 the Corporate Stance on Disarmament was reiterated by the congregation:

*In January 1983, we took a corporate stance opposing the production, storage, and use of nuclear weapons. Subsequent developments cause us now to reiterate our stance and focus on specific treaties. We call on our sisters, associates, and the communities of people with whom we live and work to:*

- Pressure the U.S. government to respect the two-pronged nature of the non-proliferation treaty and to put as much emphasis on disarmament as on non-proliferation*
- Urge the Senate to ratify the Strategic Arms Reduction and Comprehensive Test Ban Treaties*
- Insist on an annual audit of Pentagon spending on nuclear weapons.*

*This Corporate Stance was initiated by the Dubuque Area Committee on Justice (ACJ) and the Community Committee on Justice (CCJ) and promulgated in April 1983.*

and North Korea have joined those conducting nuclear testing. With unrest in the Middle East, the Western Allies have tried to keep Iraq's nuclear ambitions in check as well.

As of early 2019, the number of nuclear warheads in the world are about 13,890. Of these, approximately 9,330 are in the military stockpiles (the rest are awaiting dismantlement), of which some 3,600 warheads are deployed with operational forces, of which about 1,800 U.S., Russian, British and French warheads are on high alert, ready for use on short notice. About 93% of nuclear warheads are owned by the US and Russia, and stockpiles have been decreasing. However China, Pakistan, India, and North Korea are increasing their warhead inventories. There are increased tensions globally, creating more insecurity.

Negotiations between the U.S. and North Korea have stalled. Those with Russia and other countries, specifically Syria and Turkey, are increasingly difficult. Turkey recently announced the desire to produce their own nuclear weapons. The U.S. intends to build smaller nuclear weapons for "nuclear war fighting" as part of a plan to rebuild the entire U.S. nuclear arsenal at the cost of \$1.7 trillion over the next three decades. Conceived and initiated by the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) and Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR) in the Fall of 2017, The Call to Prevent Nuclear War is a current collaborative effort of many organizations. Back from the Brink is its initiative to engage citizens in efforts to stop the existence and proliferation of nuclear weapons by getting anti-nuclear resolutions passed at the local (municipality, state, etc.) levels.

**Sister Camilla Hemann** was a member of the ACJ, which initiated this stance, and remembers herself and other sisters being very active within the congregation as well as within the broader Dubuque community. She attended every march, made phone calls, and participated in almost every project relating to disarmament. "It was very important to do all these actions within the context of prayer. And having made this very public statement, I felt I needed to give public witness to what we said we believe as Franciscans," she said.

**Sister Marian Klostermann** responded to the stance by volunteering in 1984 with "Beyond War" to educate others on the nuclear reality and begin to change people's thinking. "Hope was given with the motivation of working together with others to build a world beyond war," she recalls. Her actions did not stop there. "While living in Sioux City and Omaha, I frequently protested at Offutt Air Force Base in Omaha where the Strategic Air Command (SAC) was located. Sometimes I entered the base with other peace folks to give messages to the commander which caused us to be arrested. A few times we were able to have conversations with base employees." Today in Dubuque Sister Marian continues to respond to this corporate stance by joining the weekly vigil for peace with others in Washington Park, across from the Federal Building.

## Sanctuary - 1987

A civil war erupted in El Salvador in late 1979 between the military-led government and a coalition of resistance movements called the Farabundo Martí Liberation Front (FMLN). A coup was followed by the government killing anti-coup protestors and the guerrillas retaliating. Government death squads, trained by the U.S., deliberately terrorized and killed thousands of civilians throughout the country, including prominent Catholic clergy, such as Archbishop Oscar Romero in March of 1980 and four church women in December of that year. Many were “disappeared” and other human rights violations occurred mainly by the military, including recruiting child soldiers. The U.S. assisted the conflict by providing \$1-\$2 million a day in military aid along with training at the then named School of the Americas in Fort Benning, Georgia. (Now called Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation.)

With an unknown number of disappeared, massacres, daily violence, and not knowing who one could trust, many Salvadorans sought refuge outside their borders. Eventually, the violence spread into neighboring countries like Guatemala, leading even more people to flee. Many came to the southern U.S. border seeking asylum. In July 1980 national news covered the story of a group of Salvadorans crossing the Sonoran Desert who were abandoned by their guides (coyotes) and 13 died. The rest were brought to Tucson and Phoenix to await deportation by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). Local churches were outraged that they would not be given the opportunity to apply for asylum and instead be sent back to most certainly face their own death. The religious community believed that the Refugee Act and other laws should protect these Central Americans fleeing for their lives and so sought ways to assist them. By March of 1982, six congregations in Arizona and California declared themselves to be “sanctuaries” based on the religious concept of a holy, safe place. Thus the Sanctuary Movement was launched, building communities of support for these increasing numbers of refugees seeking asylum. This

## Sanctuary

*Because we are a pilgrim community responding to the needs of the times and impelled by the urgency of the mission, we, the Sisters of St. Francis, voice our endorsement of the Sanctuary Movement of the Central American refugees.*

*To witness publicly to Gospel values, we engage in an active advocacy campaign to call upon the United States government:*

- 1. To guarantee full due process rights for all asylum seekers*
- 2. To commit itself to the principle of non-refoulement (no forced return when life is in jeopardy) in relation to those who seek asylum in this country*
- 3. To put an end to all actions which exert pressure upon asylum seekers to leave the U.S. without delay when they are seeking refuge here, or which intercept them outside the borders of the U.S. in order to prevent their entry*
- 4. To grant to Salvadorans and other Central Americans seeking refuge in this country the privilege of ‘extended voluntary departure’ until they can return home with a reasonable degree of safety.*

*This Corporate Stance was initiated by Sisters Mary Lee Cox, Pat R. Farrell, Maureen Leach, Nancy Miller and promulgated in 1987.*

soon spread across the United States, creating what some called a new “underground railroad.” The fact that the U.S. was complicit in creating the situation led to an even more committed response from the

*Dubuque Area Sisters held a prayer service in 2015 for Sisters Dorothy Kazel, Ita Ford, and Maura Clarke, and their associate Jean Donovan, who were brutally murdered by Salvadoran National Guard members.*



faith communities. For the most part, immigration authorities did not enter these places of sanctuary.

The Sanctuary Movement spread to the municipal level as well, with many cities passing ordinances directing law enforcement to not ask about immigration status, or otherwise outlining what they would or would not do regarding immigration enforcement. By 1987 there were some 440 declared “sanctuary cities.”

During this time, many of our sisters were ministering in areas with migrants, farm workers, and refugees including Texas, Mississippi, Florida, Iowa and California. They attended rallies, demonstrated at the SOA, visited refugees held in detention centers, and helped educate others on the situation. Our sisters arrived in El Salvador in 1986 to minister there during the civil war, echoing the actions of our founding sisters in Germany, who cared for orphans and those wounded in the Franco-Prussian war. In ministering to and standing in solidarity with the local communities, our sisters knew firsthand the dire situation in El Salvador and what happens to refugees crossing the border into the U.S.

### **The Current Reality**

Especially since the 2016 U.S. presidential election, it is déjà vu for refugees/immigrants, most from Central American countries, but also those of differing religious affiliation, especially Muslims. In campaign rhetoric, one candidate repeatedly called such refugees terrorists, rapists, criminals, and responsible for taking jobs and creating the problems in the U.S. The current Administration has thwarted the DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals)

program, sought to impose travel bans to stop immigrants from Muslim countries, and gave an executive order criminalizing sanctuary jurisdictions and cutting off funding for those cities. In addition, the reallocation of funds from the military to build a wall at the border with Mexico was announced and policies that deny application for asylum were enacted, which separate immigrating families and place them in stark conditions--many described as cages and concentration camps--without basic necessities. The Administration secretly changed the “medical deferred action” policy that had allowed undocumented immigrants to stay in the country for life-saving medical treatments, sending threatening letters to them giving them 30 days to leave the country. All these tactics of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and other government departments seem to be using cruelty and dehumanization of the refugees/immigrants as deterrence with no thought to their safety and basic needs. Solidarity with, and offering safe havens for, these current refugees and migrants is an urgent need today.

Our sisters continue to educate themselves and others on these issues, and to minister to refugees and immigrants, both documented and undocumented, collaborating with other organizations where possible.

“In 1987 when the congregation passed the corporate stance on sanctuary, **Sister Kay Koppes** and I were living in a displaced persons camp run by the Archdiocese of San Salvador with Salvadorans brought from conflict zones literally with just the

clothes on their backs,” remembers **Sister Pat Farrell**. “For many of the internal refugees, their hope and mine was for them to be welcomed in the U.S. or other countries that could provide safety from massacres and violent persecution. Our corporate stance was a public plea for protection, a prophetic posture, an expression of ethical urgency. It took the edge off my own sense of powerlessness in the face of the magnitude of the human tragedy I was witnessing daily. It made me proud then

*Sister Maureen Leach acts as a coyotee during an immigration simulation at Mount St. Francis Center in 2016.*



and still does today.”

“I had met numerous Salvadorans and heard their stories of how they fled from the violence in their homeland,” said **Sister Nancy Miller**. “I had been part of a church that provided sanctuary for a Salvadoran and that experience challenged me to look at my complicity in this situation. I was aware of how U.S. policy and financial aid to El Salvador’s repressive government was detrimental to its people and part of the problem. It was important to speak out on this issue and to provide sanctuary.”

**Sister Carol Besch** lived in El Salvador for 10 years (1987 to 1997) and was able to see the violence and poverty first hand.

“I am not surprised to see how many people from

Central America flee to a place of safety in the US. Since I have returned to the U.S., I have welcomed the immigrants who have settled in Iowa. Presently I am working with unaccompanied minors and young people from Guatemala who are trying to make a new life for themselves. It is a gift to walk with them and support their growth.”

### **Immigration Reform - 2011**

Given the influx of immigrants from Central America in the early 1980s, the U.S. Congress passed the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA). It was signed into law by President Ronald Reagan on November 6, 1986. This law made it illegal for companies to knowingly hire undocumented

immigrants, and set various penalties for doing so. In addition this law legalized most of the undocumented immigrants who arrived in the U.S. prior to January 1, 1982. In spite of the IRCA, the number of undocumented immigrants continued to rise. Animosity and suspicion toward immigrants, especially of Latinx ancestry, also continued to increase.

The U.S. Congress has made many attempts to reform the immigration process, with most failing. In 2001 the DREAM ACT (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act) proposal was first introduced. It is a process for granting residency status to qualifying immigrants who entered the United States as minors, known as Dreamers. It would first grant conditional residency and, upon meeting further qualifications, permanent residency. It was reintroduced several times, with bi-partisan support, but continued to fail passage.

Following the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency (ICE) was created. Detention and deportations increased dramatically during this time. Immigrants, understandably, experienced increased fear of profiling and deportation, even among those with documentation.

One of the country’s largest raids at the time, occurred in May 2008, when nearly 1,000

## **Immigration Reform**

*Our mission as Sisters of St. Francis of Dubuque, Iowa, is to live in right relationship with all creation. Rooted in the Gospel and the spirit of St. Francis and St. Clare we publically proclaim that immigrants have God--given rights to be treated with respect and dignity, to work and to access services that satisfy their basic needs. Basic human rights, the right to life and to migrate in search of the means to sustain life, are conferred not by citizenship but by personhood. We support comprehensive immigration reform that will respect these rights. Therefore, we call on our elected legislators of all political parties to introduce and approve comprehensive immigration reform legislation that would respect the rights and basic human needs of all people.*

*Our Catholic faith grounds us in the realization that each person has inherent dignity because he or she is created in the image and likeness of God (Gn 5:1) and the right to basic human needs (Mt 25:35-40).*

*We call on our sisters, our associates, and the communities of people with whom we live and work to:*

- Ask the U.S. government to respect the migration history of our country;
- Urge all parties to work together to promote comprehensive immigration reform that is in the best interest of all;
- Insist that the rights and dignity and basic needs of all persons are respected regardless of their legal status;
- Advocate for the development of national and international policies that respect the basic human rights of the undocumented persons;
- Advocate for a process to verify legal eligibility to work in U.S.;
- Advocate for an adequate guest worker program;
- Advocate for the development of a legalization process for the millions of undocumented people presently in the U.S. to become citizens;
- Advocate for the development of an effective, humane border security system.

*In proclaiming this stance for Comprehensive Immigration Reform we, as Francis, embrace the stranger, the outcast of society and we stand in solidarity with them.*

*This Corporate Stance was initiated by the Standing with those who are Poor Commitment Circle and promulgated in 2011.*

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents descended on a Postville, Iowa, meatpacking plant as part of the George W. Bush administration's "Operation Endgame" meant to remove all 11 million undocumented immigrants in the country within a decade. The result was 389 immigrants were detained, of which 287 were deported. Due process seemed nonexistent. Many were taken to the National Cattle Congress in Waterloo, Iowa, a facility used for livestock shows. It became a courthouse to expedite the processing of the criminal charges. They were processed in groups of 20 at a time.

Many of these were indigenous Mayans from Guatemala who came to the U.S. to escape the violence back home and to raise their families in safety. Families were torn apart, a small town traumatized and devastated. Fear understandably grew within the immigrant communities across the country. The local faith community came to the aid of these families as best they could, and became advocate voices. This incident brought the immigration debate into focus for the entire nation. "Comprehensive Immigration Reform" as a goal did not materialize during this time.

In 2012, then-Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano created the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). This was a matter of prosecutorial discretion and not federal legislation, providing temporary relief from deportation (deferred action) and work authorization for young undocumented immigrants brought to the United

States as children, allowing eligible youth to lawfully work or attend school, without fear of deportation. Participants needed to renew their status every two years.

During this time, Dubuque Franciscans continued to minister to many of the migrant and refugee populations—documented and undocumented—including Burmese, Vietnamese and Latinx, as well as ministering in Honduras. Sisters in these direct interactions helped to educate the congregation and others on the unjust treatment of these immigrants.

### Current Reality

There is obvious overlap between the Sanctuary Movement and immigration policies. According to Pew Research, the peak for unauthorized immigrants to the U.S. was 12.2 million in 2007. As of 2017 that number is 10.5 million, or 2.3% of the total U.S. population.

In recent years efforts at immigration reform have been piecemeal and shifted away from an emphasis on family reunification and employment-based migration, and more toward a merit or point system that sets specific education and work qualifications as the criteria for entrance.

The current U.S. administration has thwarted the DREAM ACT/DACA leaving many young people who were brought into the U.S. as children, in limbo. These youths have done everything asked of them, and now are unsure if the promises the U.S. made to them will be broken. They live in fear of deportation to countries they don't even remember.

Sisters Nancy Miller, Mary Lechtenberg, Marge Staudt, and Ginny Heldorfer in 2013 at the march commemorating the 5 year anniversary of the Postville raid.



ICE continues to raid various factories. In August of this year, on the first day of school, ICE conducted raids on seven food processing plants in Mississippi, rounding up hundreds of workers, separating families and creating chaos for communities. Morton, Mississippi, was one of the cities involved and Dubuque Franciscans at EXCEL, Inc. worked with the community to assist in meeting the needs of these families.

**Sister Eileen Hauswald**, Site Director of EXCEL, Inc. in Morton has seen first-hand the impact of inaction on immigration reform. Since the ICE raids there in August and her direct work with immigrants, she has seen the “human face” of the issue. “Two weeks ago, our parish celebrated the Feast of Saint Michael at one tri-lingual Mass-- English, Spanish, and Vietnamese. As parishioners came forward to receive communion, I could see that ankle monitors had been placed on a number of men and women. Meanwhile, the refrain of the communion song in Spanish spoke about receiving the body and blood of Christ. Tears came to my eyes as I reflected on the suffering that these individuals and families are experiencing.”

As for the need for reform, Sister Eileen notes that, “This immigration crisis perpetuates human rights violations as there is no legal way for the majority of migrants to come to the U.S. or to remain here if they have overstayed their VISA or had no documentation in the first place. Development and implementation of a legalization process for undocumented persons currently living in the U.S. and a fast track to citizenship has been stalled for decades. It’s time to hold our lawmakers and the executive branch accountable for their inaction on this issue.”

In Dubuque, **Sister Carol Ann Berte** volunteers twice weekly at the Presentation Lantern Center where she tutors immigrants in English. “Immigrants have every right ‘to be treated with respect and dignity’ as stated in our Sanctuary and Immigration Reform stances,” she notes. “Learning English is a key means to help them navigate in the larger community and to become productive citizens. It is a real privilege for me to get to know the immigrant, to hear them speak English, though faulty at times, and then to hear a great improvement. They make great sacrifices to come to the tutoring, affecting family and transportation, all in an attempt to use their talents in a new culture. They are beautiful folks. We need more of them!”



*Sister Judy Sinnwell, Associate Vince Vanden Heuvel, Sister Marian Klostermann, Sister Carol Ann Berte, and Sister Mary Lee Cox. Contributed photo.*

### Human Trafficking - 2014

Human trafficking is as old as the hills--capturing persons, exploiting them as slaves in horrible conditions, and/or selling them. History is replete with many instances including the Genesis story of Joseph being sold into slavery by his brothers.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s people around the world were becoming more aware of the extent of this problem. It knows no borders. Persons were being trafficked for a variety of reasons: from sex and forced labor to the harvesting of human organs. In November 2000 the United Nations introduced the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, also known as the Trafficking Protocol. Article 3 of this protocol defines human trafficking as: “The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation or the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.” This protocol is part of the broader Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime. Another related protocol to this Convention is the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea, and Air. The Trafficking Protocol came into force in December 2003 after the required 40th country ratified it. The U.S. was an early signatory in December 2000, and the U.S. Senate ratified it in November 2005.

The United States government responded to this

## Human Trafficking

*Because we believe that...*

- God created each person to have inherent dignity and basic human rights
- We are called to live in right relationship with all creation and are responsible for creating a just and moral society

*Because we know that...*

- Human trafficking, the illegal trade of human beings for commercial sexual exploitation or forced labor, is a modern form of slavery.
- Trafficking has been identified as the fastest growing criminal industry in the world and it generates billions of dollars in profit each year, second only to drug trafficking.
- The scope of human trafficking is global and has been reported in all 50 states of the United States.

An estimated 300,000 children are trafficked in the United States. It is estimated that 75-80% of human trafficking is for sex. The root causes of human trafficking include: the world-wide demand for prostitution and pornography, wide-spread poverty and homelessness, demand for cheap labor, gender discrimination, economic and social underdevelopment, and the abuse of power through control and exploitation. In the case of sex trafficking it is often the exploited victims who are criminalized and prosecuted, which prevents them from seeking help, while victims of forced labor are threatened with deportation and harm to loved ones.

*We therefore endorse the following corporate stance:*

*We, the Sisters of St. Francis of Dubuque, Iowa, in the tradition of Sts. Francis and Clare of Assisi, denounce all forms of human trafficking as criminal acts which violate basic human rights and exploit innocent people. We pledge to pray and work diligently with appropriate partners to abolish human trafficking and the economic and social systems that foster it. We commit to effective action...*

- Educate ourselves and others about the causes, extent and results of trafficking
- Collaborate with others to work for change in society by supporting programs and services for victims
- Advocate for legislation and policies that help to identify and prosecute those who exploit victims with the intention of eliminating human trafficking.
- Include in daily prayer intentions.

*This Corporate Stance was initiated by Sisters Lou Ann Kilburg, Renae Hohense, and Franciscan Associate Lisa Schmidt.*

international problem with the Trafficking Victims Violence Prevention Act of 2000 (TVPA). It defined and classified human trafficking into two main categories: sex trafficking and labor trafficking.

In 2002 the organization Polaris Project was launched. Its name, Polaris, came from the North Star which slaves in the U.S. used as a guide to navigate to freedom. They quickly began serving victims of trafficking by compiling data, starting a national hotline, and working with law enforcement across the nation. Other groups also formed to help

educate others about this crime committed in plain sight.

At the 2012 Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) Assembly the group passed a resolution to abolish Human Trafficking. This resolution committed their member congregations to collaborate in order to abolish this form of modern day slavery. In responding to this call, the Dubuque Franciscans hosted speakers and attended workshops to become more informed and empowered to take action.

### **Current Reality**

Recent statistics gathered by the Polaris Project show that human trafficking has not abated. The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that there are 40.3 million victims of human trafficking globally. Of these, 81% are trapped in forced labor; 25% are children, and 75% are women and girls. The ILO further estimates that forced labor and human trafficking is a \$150 billion industry worldwide. The U.S. Department of Labor has identified 148 goods from 75 countries made by forced and child labor. In 2017, an estimated 1 out of 7 endangered runaways reported to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children were likely child sex trafficking victims.

Currently there is no official estimate of the total number of human trafficking victims in the U.S. The best estimate is that the total number of victims nationally reaches into the hundreds of thousands when both adults and minors, as well as sex trafficking and labor trafficking are aggregated.

With the increased awareness has come more prosecutions. In the first six months of this year (2019) in Iowa, nine people were convicted for human trafficking, with five of those in May alone. The number of calls to the National Human Trafficking hotline (888-373-7888) has risen. In addition, there has been an increase in services provided for survivors. However, there is the need for greater funding for prevention efforts as well as services for survivors. In Iowa, there are currently seven restoration projects, including the Siouxland

Restoration Center which opened Lila Mae's House (<https://lilamaeshouse.org/>) in November. Our sisters and associates have been involved in the work of this coalition as well as in the Tri-States area. **Sister Shirley Fineran** has been instrumental in establishing Lila Mae's House. Current efforts of these coalitions also include training for hotel staff in recognizing the signs and what to do regarding human trafficking, sponsoring the showing of documentaries on this issue, as well as giving educational presentations to parish groups and other organizations.

Many sisters and associates have become involved in carrying out this stance, from educating others, including hotel worker trainings, to helping to fund projects. Associates **Chuck and Kathy Glatz** recall that they were first involved in the human trafficking issue just before the congregation's stance.

In 2014 they volunteered in Ghana assisting in the establishment of a school and community library with an organization seeking to rescue and rehabilitate children trafficked as workers in the fishing industry on Lake Volta. "But the Sisters' efforts informed us of how this is a problem much closer to home, and we had Associate **Lisa Schmidt** and **Sister Mary Lechtenberg** come to Ames for a program for middle-schoolers." Their involvement did not stop there. "We embraced the corporate stance more comprehensively when the Associates decided to take on assistance to Lila Mae's House as a group volunteer activity."

The associates raised funds for and helped to build a labyrinth at Lila Mae's House. "That and a couple of gatherings in Dubuque increased the involvement of the Associates in discussions about the future and have heightened our feelings of being a part of our shared mission," said the Glatz's.

## Earth Charter

*We, the Sisters of St. Francis of the Holy Family, committed to live in right relationship with all creation, take a corporate stance to endorse, promote, and implement the Earth Charter's vision, principles and values in how we live, pray, and minister, and in our advocacy for public policy.*

*This Corporate Stance was initiated by Sisters Sisters Meg Gemar, Marge Staudt, Marie Cigrand, and Michelle Balek and affirmed by the congregation in July 2019.*

### Earth Charter - July 2019

April 22, 1970 marked the first Earth Day in the U.S. There was a growing awareness around the world, of the detrimental effects our human impact was creating on the environment and how little these issues were being addressed in the political and media spheres. With this heightened awareness the U.S. established the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in December of 1970. Just two years later the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) was established as well as the Clean Water Act in the U.S. In 1987 the United Nations (UN) World Commission on Environment and Development called for the creation of a new charter in response to the multiple global environmental challenges. The UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) known as the Rio Earth Summit was an attempt to garner collaboration among member states in sustainability and development efforts. It also provided for large scale public participation. Grassroots organizations from across the globe attended outside the official meetings, pressing for sustainability, equity, and more public participation.

It was at the Rio Summit in 1992 where the drafting of an Earth Charter was launched. Consultations were held globally, from 1995 to 2000, involving diverse regions of the world, a wide variety of organizations and individuals from all walks of life and faith backgrounds. The Earth Charter

Commission worked on drafts during this time and began distributing them in 1997 to interested groups, incorporating their feedback. The final version was approved in Paris in March of 2000 and a process was launched for individuals, organizations, and governments at all levels to endorse it.

During this time, the Dubuque Franciscans also were growing in awareness of environmental issues and our call to care for creation. We have always had a committee to assist the congregation in addressing these creation care issues. In 1998 we had composed and affirmed Our

*Sisters and Associates pray a silent blessing during a gathering in Dubuque for more than 20 billboards with the message "Standing with Pope Francis; Caring for Our Common Home" placed by women religious in strategic locations throughout Iowa, southwest Wisconsin and western Illinois in 2016.*



## Preamble to the Earth Charter

*The preamble to the Earth Charter succinctly outlines the urgency of taking action: “We stand at a critical moment in Earth’s history, a time when humanity must choose its future. As the world becomes increasingly interdependent and fragile, the future at once holds great peril and great promise. To move forward we must recognize that in the midst of a magnificent diversity of cultures and life forms we are one human family and one Earth community with a common destiny. We must join together to bring forth a sustainable global society founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace. Towards this end, it is imperative that we, the peoples of Earth, declare our responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life, and to future generations.”*

Covenant with Creation. In 2005 we began studying the Earth Charter and its congruence with Franciscan values. From that study eventually was born the Sister Water Project, though as a congregation we had not officially endorsed the Earth Charter. In 2015 Pope Francis promulgated his influential encyclical *Laudato Sí, On Care for Our Common Home* in response to the critical environmental and social issues, inviting all people to dialogue and action. A year later, the Dubuque Franciscans promulgated their Land Ethic.

### **Current Reality**

The rationale written for this corporate stance this year outlines the current situation and the urgency of responding:

“We stand at a critical moment in Earth’s history, a time when humanity must choose its future.” (Earth Charter preamble) The whole Earth community is experiencing even more peril. The latest National Climate Assessment, released November 23, 2018 by the US Global Research Program, outlines severe consequences of rapidly rising global temperatures to all areas of our lives: our health, the economy, the environment, and infrastructure. The United Nations has warned that we have 12 years in which to limit climate change catastrophe.

The daily news illustrates our current national situation with its constant assault on the environment, democratic institutions and the very social fabric of our country: rollbacks of environmental protection policies, inhumane treatment of immigrants, the sharp decline in civil discourse, abandoning our global commitments, a growing economic disparity, the erosion of institutions that safeguard democracy, the rise of white supremacy and hate groups. These national assaults are mirrored in many countries across the globe. Our Earth Community is crying out for compassionate responses.

The Earth Charter encompasses Gospel and Franciscan values as well as our congregation’s commitment areas, articulating them in today’s terms. It is more important than ever to give witness

to the vision, principles, and values of the Earth Charter as a positive alternative, finding ways to take action as a congregation and in collaboration with others to create a more just and sustainable world. In his encyclical *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis calls us to live an “integral ecology” and reminds us that: “...we have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.” As Francis of Assisi related to all as brother and sister, we too are called to live this familial model of kinship in our time and place. The Earth Charter provides a framework to focus our compassionate responses to the cry of our Earth Community.

**Sister Theresa Jungers** takes an active role at Mount St. Francis in living out this stance. “As I continue to live into the values and principles of the Earth Charter, I am supported through the educational and action-oriented efforts of the Mount St. Francis Green Team, of which I am a member. I believe that every action taken to respect the earth and to care for the community of life is my way to participate in the creation of a sustainable global society, for future generations.”

**Sister Meg Gemar** one of the initiators of the stance, sees its importance in unifying all three of the congregation’s commitment areas in this stance. In recounting the current world situation, she finds her motivation to be involved as she recounts: “More storms are more severe and drastic. Plant and animal species, as well as humans, are losing their habitats and life requirements every day. The world still overlooks the poor and vulnerable, doesn’t want to help the refugees who are trying to escape violence, wars, hopeless situations, and who are looking for a place to find a decent living. We are still trying to overcome racism, sexism, trafficking of animals, plants and humans, unfair wages, and gun violence. This is why I was willing to work on the corporate stance we took on the Earth and it is what gives me hope for the future.” ■

# Check the Health of Your Estate Plan

By Sister Cathy (Kate) Katoski, OSF

**A**lready have an estate plan? Does it cover everything you need it to? Evaluate your current estate plan with the questions below and add up your points. How do you score? If you don't already have a plan, see what you can accomplish by taking time to plan your future...today.



**1. Do you have a will or living trust drafted by a qualified estate planning attorney?**

*I have either document. (+10 points)*

**2. Do you review and update your will every few years?**

*Yes, I do. (+5 points)*

**3. Have you named an executor in your will and notified that person?**

*Yes, I have. (+3 points)*

**4. Is your life insurance adequate for you and your family's needs? Are the beneficiary designations up to date?**

*I have reviewed my coverage in the past five years. (+5 points)*

**5. Do you have beneficiaries who require special care?**

*I have not made arrangements for their well-being. (-5 points)*

**6. Have you established a durable power of attorney in case you become incapacitated?**

*Yes, I have. (+5 points)*

**7. Do you have a living will or health care power of attorney?**

*I have either document in effect. (+5 points)*

**8. Does your will name a guardian for any minor children you may have?**

*Yes, it does. (+5 points)*

**9. Do you have a pet or farm animals? Have you made arrangements for their care if something were to happen to you?**

*No, I have not made arrangements. (-5 points)*

**10. Have you made any provisions for your favorite charitable organizations?**

*Yes, I have. (+5 points)*

**Total Score:**

**35 to 43 points:** Nice job! Your estate plan is in excellent condition. Make sure it stays that way by reviewing your plans regularly and after major life changes.

**25 to 34 points:** Consider your plans to be in fair condition. Set aside an afternoon to more thoroughly assess your plans, then contact an estate planning professional if you need help organizing and updating.

**24 points or less:** It's time to see an estate planning professional to make sure your plans are designed to protect the people and causes you care about most, or to get started. ■

Include the Dubuque Franciscans in your future plans! In addition to supporting loved ones, you can use your estate plan to make a difference for the causes you care about. Contact Sister Cathy Katoski at [katoskic@osfdbq.org](mailto:katoskic@osfdbq.org) or 563-583-9786 to learn how you can include the Sisters of St. Francis of Dubuque, Iowa in your estate plan today. ■

# In Remembrance

## Sister Bernice Schuetz January 6, 1929 - August 2, 2019



The second oldest child of 12, Bernice was born to Joseph and Justina (Goergen) Schuetz in a farmhouse near

Remsen, Iowa. In 1930 the family moved to a farm four miles from Currie, Minnesota. They lived there for 11 years before moving to an acreage outside of Sioux City, Iowa. Bernice finished 8th grade at St. Boniface, Sioux City, and then attended a public school for a year and a half, after which she decided to stay home to help the family. She worked the next six years at Johnson Biscuit Company in Sioux City.

Being content with her life at home and at work, she did not hear God's small gentle voice calling her

until the age of 23. After writing to several communities, she heard from Mother Ruth Mary who assured her there would be room for her in the convent. On August 25, 1952, Bernice entered the Franciscan community and the following year, on August 10, 1953, she took the name Sister Mary Hyacinth.

After many years of teaching elementary and high school students she began taking summer classes at Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa where she graduated with a master's degree in home economics education in 1967. During the six week Chapter in 1968, and a change in our government structure, Sister was elected to serve four years on the Governing Board of our community as the Regional Coordinator of the Eastern Iowa Region.

In 1978, Sister Bernice found herself "out of a job," as she stated.

At the same time, the Director of the Briar Cliff College library was asking the community to be relieved of her position. Sister Bernice was interested in this position but would have to get a master's degree in library science. She entered Rosary College in River Forest, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago, in 1980. With the guidance of Sister Joanice Theobald, Bernice was appointed Director of Briar Cliff library until 1993. Sister stayed on as a reference librarian until 2000.

Sister is survived by her sisters Gertrude (John) Sargent and Jo Ann (Jim) Weston; her brothers Ron Schuetz, Michael (Marita) Schuetz, and James (Carol) Schuetz; her sisters-in-law Jean Schuetz, Marlene Schuetz, and Barbara Schuetz; nieces and nephews, and her Franciscan sisters with whom she shared over 65 years of her life. ■

## Sister Janet Osterhoff January 16, 1941 - August 5, 2019



On January 16, 1941, Janet was born to Joseph and Louise (Jaeggi) Osterhoff in Dubuque. Janet

was the eldest of two siblings, Betty and Robert.

She attended elementary school at St. Mary's School on Jackson St., which was very convenient, as she lived near the school. Janet attended three years of high school at Immaculate Conception Academy before she entered the convent and finished her fourth year of high school.

One of Janet's memories of her youth was the time she and the neighbor children were playing hide and seek. She ran and hid downtown, eight blocks away! She ran in and out of the stores. Betty and the other friends couldn't find her, so they gave up and ran home and called the police. It wasn't a happy scene as her father was on the police force!

For Janet, becoming a Franciscan Sister was largely influenced by parish and school life at St. Mary's. She was also a member of the Catholic Students Mission Crusade (CSMC) and the Sodality, and of course, growing up in close proximity to the Sisters' convent across the street, also influenced

her greatly.

On September 3, 1958 Janet entered Mount St. Francis and the following year on August 10 she received the name Sister Mary Helena. In 1962, Sister began her ministry in Iowa as a teacher at St. Francis Xavier in Dyersville and in Dubuque at Holy Trinity, Holy Ghost, and St. Mary's. She was also missioned at St. Anne School in Hazel Crest, Illinois.

Sister Janet is survived by her sister, Betty Weiland, and her brother, Robert (Laura) Osterhoff; nieces and nephews, and her Franciscan sisters with whom she shared over 59 years of her life. ■

# In Remembrance

## Sister Romaine Pickart January 20, 1927 - August 13, 2019



**P**earl Rose Pickart was born on a farm near Norway, Iowa on January 20, 1927 to her parents, Oscar and Mary (Boddicker)

Pickart. She had five brothers, Clyde, Milton, Joseph, Lyle, and Glenn and two sisters, Hazel and Ruth.

It was in her junior year of high school that she seriously considered religious life, so serious that she went to visit her aunt, Sister Marian, who was living at St. Joe's, Iowa at the time. Their discussion must have

gone well because in her senior year of high school she decided to take a trip to Mount St. Francis. Sister Helen Marie met her at the door and gave her a thorough tour. Her entrance day was August 25, 1945.

The following year on August 12, 1946, Pearl was received into the community and given the name Sister Mary Romaine. After final profession in 1951, Sister began her professional career at St. Christopher's in Midlothian, Illinois. In Iowa, Sister was missioned at Sacred Heart School, Dubuque; St. Frances Xavier, Dyersville; Visitation, Stacyville; Briar Cliff College, Sioux City; Holy Ghost, Dubuque; Stonehill Care Center, Dubuque; St.

Joseph, Earlville; and Sacred Heart, Maquoketa. In addition to the schools in Iowa, Sister Romaine also ministered at Sacred Heart in Melrose Park, Illinois, and St. Paul's School in Eugene, Oregon.

At the time of writing her autobiography Sister Romaine didn't know what the future would hold for her, but she considered herself very blessed to have had so many varied types of experiences: as a teacher, principal, secretary, admissions recruiter, media center worker, and serving in parish ministry.

Sister is survived by her sisters-in-law, Helen and Mary Pickart; nieces and nephews, and her Franciscan sisters. ■

## Sister Carol Hoverman November 22, 1938 - October 3, 2019



**O**n November 22, 1938 Carol was born to Gerhard (Gary) and Amanda (Pins) Hoverman in the New

Hampton, Iowa hospital. Four years later her brother Jim was born. They grew up on the 160 acre family homestead owned by her grandparents southwest of Alta Vista, Iowa in Chickasaw County.

Carol attended grade and high school at St. William School in Alta Vista. The Franciscans were a part of the Hoverman family as both her mother and father were taught by Franciscan Sisters throughout their twelve years of education. Carol's mother played the piano which influenced Carol's love for music. It was in junior high that Carol realized she would be a Sister because there were

religious vocations on both sides of the family. On August 25, 1956, Carol entered the Franciscan community. The following year, on August 12, 1957 as a novice, she received the name Sister Mary Angela Merici, in honor of her godmother, Angela Hoverman Offerman.

Sister Carol's first assignment as a teacher was at Sacred Heart School in Melrose Park, Illinois. This school was multicultural and had 1,200 students. After 10 years at Melrose Park, she moved to St. Mary's School in Dubuque. Sister's favorite teaching experience was putting on recitals and musicals, such as *The Wizard of Oz* and *Tom Sawyer* with the upper grade students.

In 1980, as St. Mary's was dwindling in the number of students, Sister Carol was asked to become the part-time Media Coordinator for the Archdiocese of Dubuque in addition to teaching

part-time.

In 1982 Sister became full time Director of Communications for the Archdiocese. Archbishop Hanus offered Sister Carol the position of editor for the archdiocesan newspaper, *The Witness*, in 2001. Sister interned from January to June of 2002, and then became the first woman editor of *The Witness*.

While the community was preparing for our 100th anniversary, Sister Carol began writing original songs for community events. Many of these songs are in the *Sing Joyfully* book and are used on various occasions. Sister would say that it gave her great joy to hear how her songs were used in a variety of ways.

Sister is survived by her brother Jim Hoverman (Mary Pat Cole); nieces and nephews; and her Franciscan sisters. ■

# In Remembrance

## Sister Barbara Schaefer November 5, 1928 - October 24, 2019



**O**n November 5, 1928, Barbara was born at St. Francis Hospital in Waterloo, Iowa to Peter and Wilhelmina

(Haberzeth) Schaefer.

Both parents saw to it that all five of their children received thorough training and instruction in the Catholic faith. Every year in grade school, Barbara remembers the teacher asking the class what they would like to be when they “grew up.” Her response was to become a sister. “I have literally been a Franciscan since birth being born at St. Francis Hospital, cared for by the Franciscan Sisters from Wheaton, Illinois, taught by the Franciscans of Dubuque, from kindergarten through 12th grade, and had Franciscan Fathers from St. Louis Province as

spiritual care givers at St. Mary’s Parish in Waterloo, Iowa.” Given this, it was inevitable that Barbara would eventually join the Sisters of St. Francis of Dubuque.

On August 25, 1947 Barbara entered Mount St. Francis as a postulant. The following year on August 12, 1948, Barbara was received into the community and given the name Sister Mary Roland.

She ministered as an educator at many schools in Iowa including St. Mary’s in Remsen, Ashton, Dubuque, Manchester, Roseville/Marble Rock, and Waterloo, and on the western side of Iowa at St. Joseph, Bode and St. Michael’s and Heelan in Sioux City. Sister Barbara also taught at Sacred Heart Schools in Dubuque and Melrose Park, Illinois.

In 2000, Sister retired to Mount St. Francis, and in 2007 moved to Holy Family Hall until 2011 when she moved to Clare House.

Sister is survived by her sister Gloria Ann Barfield; nieces and nephews, and her Franciscan sisters.

## Rest in Peace

### **Donna Wingert**

*Sister-in-law of Sisters Mona and Jolene Wingert*

### **Rebecca (Becky) Zapanta**

*Sister of Sister Terri Rodela*

### **Merle Friedman**

*Brother of Sister Lois Friedman*

### **Lois Taphorn**

*Sister-in-law of Sister Janet Taphorn*

### **Bernard Dansart**

*Franciscan Associate and husband of Franciscan Associate Marilyn Dansart*

### **Joan Pasker**

*Sister of Sister Rita Goedken*

### **Donald (Don) Helderfer**

*Brother of Sister Ginny Helderfer*

### **Thomas Nealon**

*Brother-in-law of Janet Haverkamp*

### **Merlyn Altman**

*Brother-in-law of Sister Carol Ann Berte*

## Sister Bev Eichler Reunites with First Grade Class from 1961

**T**his summer, **Sister Bev Eichler** (Mary Owen) received a special invitation from former students to the 50th reunion of the 8th grade class of 1969 from St. Mary’s School in Waterloo. Sister Bev taught them first grade in 1961.

“It was truly a wonderful time and a delight to have Sister Bev with us to celebrate,” said her former student **Chris Draude**. “Every one was so happy to see her and she still remembered classmates by name!”

**Father John Haugen** was also happy to reunite with Sister Bev.

“We were THRILLED she came to our reunion. We had a Mass and then a meal and it was so good for her to be there,” he said. “She had huge classes in those days, and her memory of her students was great--maybe TOO great in some instances! It was a real blessing and connection to the past.” ■



*Sister Bev Eichler (bottom row, third from right) with the students she taught first grade to in 1961. Contributed photo.*

# Creating Communion at the Intersection of Racism, Migration and Climate Crisis

by Sister Michelle Balek, OSF

Every August the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) holds a National Assembly for its members. This gathering offers opportunities for networking, prayer, and celebration. Key to this assembly is education and reflection on important issues of religious life leadership and the role of women religious in the broader society. In reading the signs of the times, the LCWR affirms resolutions to address current issues and suggest actions for member congregations in enacting the resolutions. This summer's Assembly, entitled *Imagining Leadership in a Global Community*, was attended by nearly 700 leaders of Catholic sisters, including the Dubuque Franciscan Leadership Team. Through keynote speakers and table conversations, many challenges for women religious leaders were presented as they focus on bringing hope to a struggling world. In addressing some of the issues our world faces, the Assembly passed a resolution looking specifically at the intersection of racism, migration, and the climate crisis:

“Reading the signs of the times from our desire to create communion, we, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, affirm the interrelatedness of the justice concerns addressed by the LCWR Call for 2015-2022. We are heartbroken by the myriad ways our one human family and Earth, our common home, suffer from disconnection, indifference, violence, and fear in the face of racism, migration, and climate crisis. Responding to God who loves all of creation into being, we recommit ourselves to create communion and examine root causes of



Sisters Yesenia Fernandez, MGSps, Marie Cigrand, OSF, and Ramona Miller, OSF at the LCWR banquet.

injustice. We particularly focus on the intersection of racism, migration, and climate crisis. We recognize a sense of urgency and pledge prayer, education, and advocacy. We will use our collective voice, resources, and power in collaboration with others to establish justice which reflects God's creating love.

We are committed to contemplative listening to the signs of our times and compassionate response to the cries of our brothers and sisters, and to Earth and its biosphere. In 2018 the LCWR membership pledged to go deeper into the critical work of recognizing racism as a systemic, structural cause underlying and contributing to the multiple situations of injustice identified in the LCWR Call. This resolution builds on the work undertaken in response to the commitments of previous assemblies and is consistent with the LCWR Call for 2015-2022.”

As Leadership Team member **Sister Marie Cigrand** reflected on this resolution, she saw many connections with our congregation.

“Francis and Clare provide great inspiration to us as we address the intersectionality of the many justice issues facing the global community. The mission statement of the Sisters of St. Francis clearly states what our response will be to the LCWR Resolution: “live in right relationship”, “commit to ongoing conversion,” and our three areas of special focus: “deepen our relationship with Mother Earth and Sister Water”, “stand with persons who are poor”, and “make peace and practice nonviolence.” ■



Sisters Kathy Knipper, OSF, Chala Hill, FHM, and Cathy Katoski, OSF at the LCWR banquet.

# Footprints



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Dubuque, Iowa 52001-1311

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## Nine Franciscan Associates Commissioned

On Sunday, September 22, the Dubuque Franciscans commissioned nine new Associates who completed the two-year Franciscan Way of Life (FWL) process.

Linda Crisman reflected on her path to becoming an associate.

“Family has always been important to me. I feel honored and blessed to have journeyed for two years with my family of FWL candidates. Now because of this teamwork and engagement, I am excited to be a part of the larger Franciscan family and the opportunities it will bring to make a difference.”

In her reflection on the readings, **Sister Kathy Knipper** challenged the assembly to make such a difference when she asked, “And so my Sisters and Franciscan Associates, are we willing as individuals and collectively as community to be in relationship, work for justice, be honest in things great and small, and encounter the least among us, all in the name of faith and love? The call to conversion for the sake of transforming the world in the name of love is ours.”

**Associate Director Lisa Schmidt** had met with each of the candidates as they completed the FWL and was impressed by each: “They are committed to the Franciscan Way of Life, and it was a privilege to get to know them. They have a passion for social justice and carrying out the Franciscan values.” ■



Front row (seated) left to right: Lori Pottebaum, Judy Gansemer, and Beth Oppelt. Back row left to right: Pat Wiss, Mark Johnson, Linda Crisman, Eunice Enk, Jane and Dave Heiar. Photo by Sister Phyllis Manternach.

## Calendar of Events

### DECEMBER 14

Snail Mail Social, 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m., Shalom Spirituality Center, 1001 Davis St., Dubuque. Enjoy a morning of coffee and light refreshments during our snail-mail socials. Write letters, a Christmas newsletter, address your Christmas cards or work on cards for cancer patients, shut-ins, or soldiers. Various greeting cards and stationery will be available.

### DECEMBER 18

Drum Circle, 6:30 p.m., Canticle of Creation Center, 3390 Windsor Ave., Dubuque. Free will offering. Register to [canticle@osfdbq.org](mailto:canticle@osfdbq.org).

### JANUARY 6

Women's Christmas: An Evening of Rest & Restoration, 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., Shalom Spirituality Center, 1001 Davis St., Dubuque. This evening mini-retreat is a good time to pause and take a break from all that has kept you hurried and busy. \$18 or \$30 if signing up with a friend. Call Shalom at (563) 582-3592 to register.