

Footprints



Footprints

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

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Cover Photo



Sister Nancy Schreck talks with Teresita Amador as they work on birdhouses at Excel, Inc. in Okolona, Mississippi in June 2020. Photo by Adam Robison/Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal.

Footprints

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Contents

4 Ministry in a Time of Pandemic

Sisters detail changes to their ministry in a turbulent 2020.

8 DBQ OSFs Use Stimulus Funds Creatively

Sisters create a grant program for those in need.

11 Past Pandemics

Sister Dorothy Schwendinger reflects on her connections to past pandemics.

12 Statement on Racial Injustice

The DBQ Franciscan Leadership Team releases a statement on racial injustice in the United States.

13 Making a Tax-Free Gift with an IRA

News and information from the Development Office.

14 I Want You to Know

Sisters participate in a fun social media campaign in the spring of 2020.

17 In Remembrance

Remembering the lives of our deceased sisters.

18 Human Trafficking Coalition Celebrates Passage of Bill

The bill stipulates that hotels and motels must receive training on how to recognize and address the signs of human trafficking.

19 New Leadership Team Installed

The team will serve the congregation from 2020 to 2026.

A message from

Leadership

With seemingly little warning, the coronavirus pandemic turned our world upside down last March. We were all impacted; we quickly needed to rethink our actions and live differently. So what are we learning in this COVID-time?

- We are all in this together, united in a common cause. Each and every worker is valued and is essential: hairdressers, housekeepers, food service, scientists, medical personnel, teachers, faith leaders, meatpackers, delivery/supermarket workers, etc.
- We are generous with compassion and simple kindnesses go a long way.
- What we each do, even if it seems small and insignificant, truly matters.
- We name what we fear, how we cope, and what we value. We understand in new ways the power of relationship, hope, and love.
- We better know what happens when we slow down. We redefine dependency and ordinary. We can work productively from home. Meetings can be accomplished via video conference.
- We realize the treasure of family and friends and that all of life is gift and precious. We worry about our loved ones, and we live with our own isolation and emptiness.
- We embody gratitude in new ways, believing God companions us in the unknowns. We adapt and respond; we honor resiliency and inner strength.
- We witness interconnectedness of all creation; air is less polluted and water is clearer.
- We recognize there is a time to shelter and stay put and a time to emerge for the sake of community, safety, and health.
- We attest to hidden gifts amidst the swell and ebb of the heartaches of the world and the burdens found in our personal lives. May we continue to make space for energy and patience, trusting that God intercedes through our anguish and vulnerability as we live and serve in these unusual times.

And the greatest learning, love and determination always find a way.

--Sister Kathy Knipper, 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 Kathy Knipper
President

Sister Pat Clemen
Vice President

Sister Maureen Leach
Vice President

Sister Brenda Whetstone
Vice President





Sister Mary Kenneth Heman, 96, makes sandwiches for the Dubuque Food Pantry in April 2020. Photo by Sister Phyllis Manternach.

“Going Forward in Trust!”

Dubuque Franciscans Detail Ministry in Time of Pandemic

by Jessi Russo

On March 8, 2020, the first cases of COVID-19 in Iowa were announced. Shortly after, the Dubuque Franciscans’ Director of Nursing and Administrator made the decision for sisters to “stay home” at Mount St. Francis Center. But even though sisters found themselves “locked down” they would still find ways to meet the needs of others. Here are just some of the ways the sisters both near and far have continued to minister in recent months.

Ministry Inside of Mount St. Francis

A few weeks prior to the lockdown a sister suggested to **Sister Sarah Kohles** that she consider offering some virtual sessions at Shalom Spirituality Center. At that time Sister Sarah was teaching 70 first year Lutheran seminary students an introductory course on the gospels at Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque. But when Shalom had to

close its doors due to the virus, Sister Sarah knew the time was now.

“We couldn’t just close Shalom,” she said. So she brainstormed what she could offer. What has transpired are Shalom’s first virtual sessions: a faith sharing group on Sunday afternoons and a more structured session titled, “Scripture in Times of Disruption” on Wednesday evenings.

“It’s been a way for people who are at a distance--some who are alone--to connect with a wider world that’s meaningful,” said Sister Sarah. “It’s a way I can share my scripture background with a larger audience and help meet a need right now.”

Sister Sarah said that a range of people have joined the free sessions offered weekly over Zoom--including a handful of her students from Wartburg.

“I’m enjoying exploring the biblical text through the perspective of disruption. By considering the context in which the biblical text was written and the

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upheaval we are experiencing now, we engage both our minds and hearts. I am delighting in seeing people share and encounter the Bible in new ways.”

For **Sister Norma Jean Holthaus**, her ministry as a spiritual director has moved from being in person to talking by telephone.

“I cannot meet with my directees as I had before so now they phone me and we have a spiritual direction time via the phone,” she said. “It certainly is not the same, but it is helpful and we can stay in touch that way.”

Sister Norma Jean has used this time to connect with friends and family by phone also.

“I call just to see how they are doing. I am especially mindful of parents with small children who have been unable to be out and about! Phone ministry works!” she said.

The Liturgy Team of **Sisters Camilla Hemann and Marge Staudt** have been working through a myriad of challenges to their ministry.

“On March 19, 2020 we learned we would not be able to have Mass until further notice,” said Sister Camilla. Sisters are allowed to gather in chapel for daily morning and evening prayer while maintaining the appropriate social distancing.

“We’ve also have had a Service of the Word on Sunday and Wednesday with several Sisters presiding. Some enjoy preparing their own reflections of the Word,” said Sister Marge Staudt, who also serves on the Liturgy Team. “On all other days we are gifted with a homily sent by Father Bob Beck, whose perspective we continue to appreciate.”

Both Sisters Marge and Camilla noted how recent months have made them grateful for community prayer.

“What we have learned through this is how much we appreciate community coming together in prayer,” said Sister Camilla. “Although we are confined, we pray daily for an end of this virus and ‘that all remain calm and confident in God’s wisdom, power, goodness and care.’”

The Dubuque Franciscans’ Archivist **Sister**



Sister Sarah Kohles sits at her desk where she hosts two virtual sessions for Shalom Spirituality Center via Zoom each week. To register, contact Shalom at info@shalomretreats.org. Photo by Sister Phyllis Manternach.

Maxine Lavell has been working to document this time in the congregation’s history.

“I am creating a historical log of events from the beginning of the virus worldwide and history of the state of Iowa as well as the Dubuque County and what we are doing to stay safe here on the hill, including pictures, for the archives,” she said.

During the lockdown, Sister **Dorothy Schwendinger** discovered a new way to make connections via the local newspaper.

“At the height of the outrage over the death of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter movement, I read a letter in the *Dubuque Telegraph Herald* objecting to the chant “Black Lives Matter.” I disagreed and instead of writing a response to the newspaper, I decided to contact the writer directly and invite her into a conversation,” said Sister Dorothy. The two now correspond by letter and emails. “I think that instead of creating an adversary I made a new friend. Perhaps the time for reflection that the pandemic provided inspired me to take an alternative and more peaceable option.”

Sister Mary Arnold Staudt has had to change the format of her “Music Appreciation Classes” she offered monthly into “easy listening” sessions that help entertain the sisters.

“I play the piano in the Clare House dining room and sisters come and watch or listen from the TV in their rooms,” said Sister Mary Arnold. “Most recently I played “Red, White and Blue Piano Music,” honoring the 4th of July.”

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At Clare House, sisters have not only enjoyed Sister Mary Arnold's music but the entertainment provided by a mother duck who flew into the courtyard and birthed 12 ducklings.

"At Clare House we shared a common interest in the ducks as we watched them hatch and grow," said **Sister Sally Mitchell**. "Seeing the care that mother duck had for their young was a true lesson in nature."

Sisters at Mount St. Francis Center were also able to work together offering service to the Dubuque Food Pantry by preparing free bag lunches for area children in April.

"More than one sister commented that she was grateful that we could do something to be of help during the coronavirus situation," said **Sister Rita Goedken**.

Sisters made sandwiches and then packed brown paper bags full of fruit and other goodies. The Food

Pantry then picked up the kids' lunch bags each day and delivered them to Operation New View where they were distributed.

Ministry Outside of Mount St. Francis

Sister Kay Gaul continued teaching religion to students at Wahlert Catholic High School via Zoom from April 13 to June 2.

"It was a new challenge, but learning for both students and myself happened," she said.

"I was very proud of my students and the respect and care shown and desire to learn even distantly. I hope to be teaching in the fall."

In Melrose Park, Illinois, **Sisters Nila Meyerhofer and Jan Hrubes**, also transitioned their ministry with the Franciscan Resource Center online.

"Zoom is our way to participate in area agency meetings where we keep up with the area needs and client resources available," said Jan.

"Also Zoom meetings help our Franciscan Community Group to continue to communicate with each other," said Sister Nila. "Life here has changed with the spread of the virus and developing other ways of communicating with others."

In Stacyville, Iowa, **Sister Millie Leuenberger** did what she could to help parishioners of Visitation Church.

"I made calls to let people know the new commentaries for the readings were now in church and also delivered them to those not going to Mass," she said. "Also a number of people have asked for prayers--for loved ones who are nurses and are exposed to COVID-19 and some family members who mentally are having a hard time with the pandemic," said Sister Millie. She continues to telephone the homebound who may be lonely. "These phone calls are much appreciated," she added.

For **Sister Ruth Schock**, trying to find ministry after retiring in May from Briar Cliff University in Sioux City, Iowa, has had some challenges.

"I attended a three week online retirement seminar offered through Chicago Theological University and am now trying to figure out what to do," said Sister Ruth. "I have signed up to read and record for the blind through the Iowa Radio Reads program. They have volunteers read and record the various newspapers and I offered to read and record books for them."

Also in Sioux City is **Sister Janet Kreber** and she has found a new ministry.

Prayer in a Time of Pandemic

By Sister Michelle Balek, OSF

God of Mystery,
Remind us in this uncertain time that you are:
always creating,
always inviting,
always loving
You call us to do the same.

Help us to see with new eyes
that we are deeply connected
even in this, our imposed isolation.
We are never alone.

Calm our fears, opening our hearts to the myriad gifts of
this moment in time:
the recognition anew of the preciousness of all life
the call to serve one another in new ways
the invitation to sacrifice our complacency and comfort
for keen awareness and gratitude for all our blessings
the latent creativity birthed forth anew.

May we enter courageously into the mystery of now
caring for one another
believing we have what we need
acknowledging and trusting this paschal journey
will surprise us with new life in unexpected ways.

God of Love,
Walk with us
as we strive to follow your path of love
this day and always. ■

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"I'm working at the Food Bank of Siouxland since my other jobs ended," she said. "I volunteer from one to five mornings a week there."

Sister Mary Day feels that she's been fortunate to continue work on community projects in Sioux City. In one of her ministries she's been working with translators who are able to communicate news about the pandemic.

"As a member of the Board of Directors at Mary J. Treglia Community House, a place that assists immigrants as they become citizens, I have been directly involved in finding immigrant peoples who are capable of translating daily news (national and local) into seven different languages and create a podcast that is heard over Siouxland Public Media and on YouTube and other social media outlets," said Sister Mary. "Most recently we have created bulletin boards outside other non-profit agencies with both the news and photos of the immigrants translating the news. We have had good response to this project which is one of a kind in our area."

In Waterloo, Iowa, **Sister Carole Freking's** ministry with Bridges Out of Poverty has gone through many adaptations since the pandemic began.

"We were starting a new group for our Bridges Out of Poverty program the next week after the shut-downs began and immediately postponed classes until fall," she said. "But when we all were encouraged to 'stay home' in March, I thought of the many people who live alone and wouldn't see

another human day after day. So I invited a former co-teacher to join me in a new ministry: to daily send these people an email to remind them that they are thought about and prayed for, as well as to give them something inspirational or to elicit a smile that day."

International Ministries

In Honduras, the country locked down on March 16, said **Sister Nancy Meyerhofer**.

"Only banks, pharmacies and supermarkets have been open and one can only go out on the day of one's 'number'--the last digit of your ID card. This is about once every two weeks," said Sister Nancy.

Sister Nancy's ministry with San Antonio De Padua Parish in La Entrada cannot be done from home, but at the beginning of May she was asked to do a TV program with the local Catholic station.

"Originally its target audience were the catechists, since I usually met with them every two weeks, but then I realized that others were also tuning in even beyond the parish," she said. "So I have made the weekly themes more general, but always some kind of formation is given."

Topics of the TV programs Sister Nancy has offered have included Mary, effects of living under quarantine and how to handle them, "where is God in all this," stories of solidarity in COVID-19 times, and liturgical celebrations such as Pentecost.

Sister Frances Nobsich's ministry came to a sudden halt in St. Lucia when the country closed down due to COVID-19.

"I quickly moved to the Archdiocesan Pastoral Center just prior to travel between north and south of the country being closed," she said.

While living at the center on her own, she worked on a small number of painting, varnishing and cleaning projects to help enhance the building upon reopening.

"Our staff has been furloughed and the only ones who have come in to do any work have done so on a volunteer basis as we have no funds to pay them. Just last week we were able to get some food items to give to them," she said.

She has recently been able to resume in-person spiritual direction with strict guidelines in place.

"We go forward in trust!" said Sister Frances. ■



Sister Bertha Bonert (center) visits with Sister Mildred Nachtman (left) and Sister Mary Kivlahan (right) on Sister Mary's 90th birthday party with social distancing in July. Photo by Sister Janet Haverkamp.



Photo on left: Sister Mary Beth Goldsmith delivers food in Mississippi. Photo by Sister Nancy Schreck. Photo top right: Dubuque Franciscan Associate Doris Menjivar delivers food in Gracias, Lempira, Honduras. Contributed photo. Bottom right: A parishioner from San Antonio de Padua delivers food in La Entrada, Copan, Honduras. Contributed photo.

DBQ Franciscans Create Grants with Stimulus Funds

by Sister Maureen Leach and Jessi Russo

Like the rest of the nation, the Sisters of Saint Francis of Dubuque, Iowa, each received a stimulus check from the government.

Immediately the sisters decided that they would use the \$1,200 each sister received to set up grants to support people who needed help quickly due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“When a crisis unfolds, the Dubuque Franciscan Sisters want to help,” said **Sister Kathy Knipper**, president of the congregation. “When the Finance Office informed the Leadership Team that each sister would receive an Economic Input Payment for each member of the congregation, we thought we could use those funds to care for those who were in need due to

the pandemic.”

The sisters created a very simple grant application and an ad hoc committee was formed. **Sisters Virginia Jennings, Edith Gottsacker, Ruth Kleitsch and Kathy Knipper** met to consider applications. All grant requests had to be initiated by a sister and organizations had to have a history of collaborating with other groups/entities. The funds were used to address immediate needs around food, health, and safety related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The money was distributed within days of approval. Forty-five non-profit organizations in Iowa, Mississippi, Texas, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, Washington, DC, Massachusetts, Maryland, and Honduras received anywhere from \$1,000 to \$5,000

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each, for a total of \$200,000.

Sister Nancy Schreck applied for a grant for Excel, Inc. in Okolona, Mississippi.

“We sought funds in order to be able to assist people with food, and with utilities and rent especially for those whose employment was affected by the virus,” said Sister Nancy. “There was a small portion in the grant to provide for transportation to get the food delivered to people living out in rural areas, not able to get to Excel.”

Sister Nancy said the greatest demand for the grant was for food for those in need. She along with Dubuque Franciscan **Sisters Reyna Helen Badillo, and Mary Beth Goldsmith** recognized that many area immigrants in Mississippi didn’t qualify for services of area agencies. The sisters made a weekly shopping trip of 50 miles round trip to nearby Tupelo to purchase groceries and other supplies and then delivered them to people’s homes.

“The deliveries were made using appropriate social distancing and masks--so waves of gratitude and a blown kiss of thanks were a great reward,” said Sister Nancy. “I just hope that the members of the congregation realize the significance of the gift these COVID grants are to God’s people in need.”

A Zoom faith-sharing meeting led **Sister Lois Erpelding** to learn of a community in Minnesota that needed help.

“In April 21, I was in a Zoom call titled, ‘Life and Dignity of the Human Person.’ Our facilitator lived in Worthington, Minnesota, and other participants of the call were in Worthington. We shared concerns about need to honor dignity of all,” said Sister Lois.

Sister Lois learned that Worthington was a “hot spot” in Minnesota with over 200 testing positive for the COVID-19 virus by April 24. When the congregation’s Leadership Team announced that grants were available, Sister Lois thought of the Worthington community and wanted to help. She was put in touch with Father James Callahan, who is pastor of St. Mary Church and chair of the Our Lady of Guadalupe Free Clinic in Worthington.

“He said to me, ‘people are choosing between food and medicine. Our parish and clinic will find ways to provide medicine,’” remembered Sister Lois.

Grant funding for Our Lady of Guadalupe Free Clinic helped provide medical and mental health care to Worthington residents.

“Because of the virus, more people are dealing with severe depression, diagnosed psychiatric



Sister Carol Hawkins, OSF (in background) works with parishioners in Gracias, Lempira, Honduras, to put together items for delivery. Contributed photo.

disorders, and increased domestic violence. The clinic helps address all these issues,” she said.

In a letter to the Dubuque Franciscan Sisters, Father James wrote, “Thanks to you, culturally sensitive help and information is available with a phone call. Help to access testing. Help to understand masks, social distancing, isolation, and how to care for themselves and loved ones with the coronavirus. Help to stay on their medications for underlying health conditions when they have no funds left to get those themselves. Help to know when to go to the ER. You are the reason more than 1,000 patients have a trusted place to turn to for medical care in the midst of the uncertain times of COVID-19 pandemic.”

Sister Mary Lou Reisch requested funds for an organization in Washington DC that left an impression on her since the 1990s.

“I volunteered for one week in 1990 at So Others Might Eat (SOME) with **Sisters Rosemary Vaske, Rose Mary Thillen, and Edna Ginder**, and then again in 1992 with **Sisters Mary Klisart, Janet Kreber, and Verna Gaul**,” said Sister Mary Lou Reisch.

SOME is a non-profit organization which provides food, clothing, and healthcare services to the poor and homeless and works to break the cycle of

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homelessness by providing job training, counseling, and low-cost housing.

“Just the short time I spent with Father John Adams and his SOME team left me with life-lasting memories of the many people who benefited from their persistence, generosity, and help to make a difference for those in need.”

Grant funding helped SOME to distribute hot to-go breakfasts and bagged lunches; provided telehealth for medical and psychiatric services; facilitated daily conference calls and food delivery to senior residents; and offered resources to those losing employment.

“It’s been 30 years but I still read the SOME newsletters about their work to alleviate the poverty in DC,” she added.

In Honduras, **Sister Nancy Meyerhofer** sought help for 200 families in the parish she ministers at in LaEntrada, Copan.

“The money received helped with people who are hungry because they have no income due to the COVID-19 crisis,” she said. With the grant, food was purchased and parishioners helped to package and

deliver it to the homes of those in need.

“We have been in very strict lockdown here since Monday, March 16, 2020,” said Sister Nancy. “This is a real hardship for the majority of our parishioners in town who are day workers and live from day to day. The social ministry of our parish has been working to help families suffering from hunger in this extended lockdown.”

The sisters who were on lockdown in Dubuque were happy to provide this gift, especially since they have not been able to go out to perform the services that they typically do in the community.

“It was a great privilege to share our stimulus monies with so many in need,” said **Sister Edith Gottsacker**, who served on the grant committee.

“These grants helped give expression to the living out of the congregation’s constitutional commitments to bear witness to God’s extravagant love, to respond to the needs of the times, and to further the reign of God in human life and social structures,” said Leadership Team member **Sister Maureen Leach**, quoting the constitutions of the congregation. ■

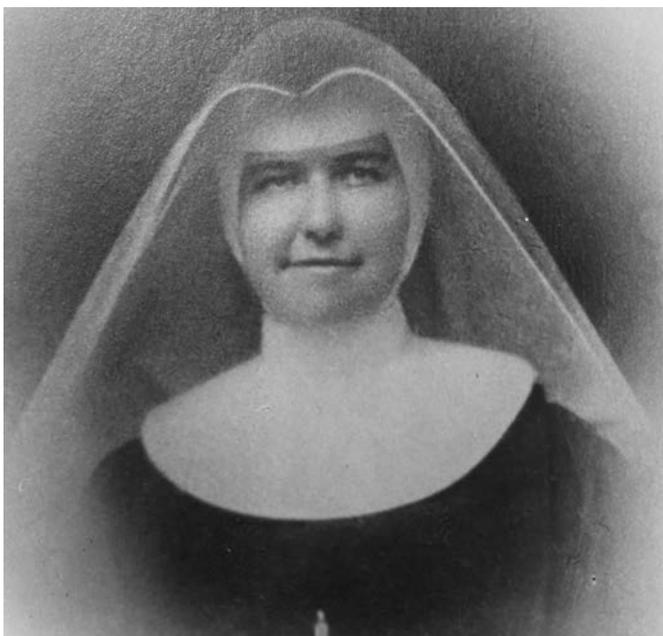
Organizations that received COVID-19 Grants

Catholic Charities, Dubuque
Opening Doors, Dubuque
SS Peter & Paul Catholic Church,
Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin
Food Bank of Siouxland, Sioux City
San Antonio (Texas) Catholic Worker House
Excel, Inc., Okolona, Mississippi
Our Daily Bread Food Pantry, Bruce,
Mississippi
St. Christopher Catholic Church,
Pontotoc, Mississippi
Dubuque Rescue Mission
Dubuque Food Pantry
Dream Center, Dubuque
Resources Unite, Dubuque
Our Lady of Guadalupe Free Clinic,
Worthington, Minnesota
Community Action Agency of Siouxland, Sioux
City, Iowa
Annunciation House, El Paso, Texas
Catholic Charities, Jackson, Mississippi
St. Peter’s Outreach Committee,
Eagle River, Wisconsin
Caring Hands Outreach Center, Altoona, Iowa
Presentation Lantern Center, Dubuque
UISG COVSolidarity, Silver Springs, Maryland
Interfaith Community for Detained Immigrants,
Chicago

Food Bank of Iowa, Des Moines
Church of Reconciliation, San Antonio, Texas
Almost Home, Dubuque
Red Basket Project, Dubuque
Hillcrest Family Services, Dubuque
Gracias Community, Honduras
EMBARC, Waterloo, Iowa
Refugee Alliance of Central Iowa, Des Moines
Partners in Health, Boston, Massachusetts
Chicago Food Depository
Parish San Antonio de Padua, La Entrada
Honduras
St. Vincent DePaul, Grayslake, Illinois
Hills and Dales, Dubuque
Fountain of Youth, Dubuque
Mary J. Treglia Community House, Sioux City,
Iowa
Catholic Church Extension Society, Chicago
Monticello (Iowa) Food Pantry
Crescent Community Health Center, Dubuque
Catholic Church Extension Society, Chicago
Interfaith Welcome Coalition, San Antonio,
Texas
Mitchell County Food Bank, Osage, Iowa
So Others Might Eat (S.O.M.E.), Washington,
DC
Metro Catholic Outreach, Cedar Rapids, Iowa
St. Vincent DePaul, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Pandemics of the Past

by Sister Dorothy Schwendinger



Sister Mary Ruth Kane.

During the lock-down we are all experiencing in 2020, our minds may get to wondering how people navigated serious pandemics in the past. For example, I have always felt that my life was quite profoundly touched by the 1918-1919 influenza epidemic even though it was decades before I was born. Have you ever wondered how our congregation navigated those years?

It was Mark Twain who once said, "History doesn't repeat itself, but it does rhyme." How so? My own memories got me to thinking about my experience today and what was the congregation's experience in 1918-1919. I discovered that while perhaps 50 million people world-wide died in that flu epidemic, apparently only one member of the Dubuque Franciscans died according to **Sister Eunice Mousel's** history book, "They Have Taken Root." She informs us that though the sisters themselves were not stricken, they bravely went out to nurse the sick in their homes. They cooked, did the laundry, cared for the dying, and helped many families grieve as they buried their dead. She tells this story: "A martyr to the work of nursing the epidemic-stricken ill during these months was **Sister Mary Ruth Kane**, a young sister in her early 20s who succumbed to the disease and died November 6, 1918. Sister Ruth Kane grew up in Fillmore, Iowa, and she entered Mount St. Francis in 1913. During the epidemic she volunteered to nurse the sick orphans at St. Mary's Home. When

she got the flu herself and was in a dying condition, her parents, her younger sister (who later became a member herself), and **Mother Coletta Rohret** gathered at her bedside. All day, on the last day of her life, they stood watch--offering their support and presence, and certainly their prayers. She died that evening at the age of 24.

I draw some personal connections to this story. Sister Eunice Mousel, a most accomplished English teacher, must have known the Kane family well. Eunice was sent to teach at the small two-year high school in Fillmore in 1922. According to my mother (also from Fillmore), Sister Eunice was not in the best of health and so the congregation thought the country air of a very rural area would be good for her. Normally such a brilliant teacher might not have been sent to such a small high school. My mother considered this a stroke of luck as Sister Eunice became a teacher and a very dear life-long friend to my mother, **Levina Rea**. Eunice must surely have learned that my mom, Levina, lost her mother to the flu in 1919. My mother was only seven years old when **Margaret Kinsella Rea** died. Margaret, at 41, left a husband and four young bereaved children and she died while she was pregnant. Her obituary states that she was a woman of "singular loveliness." She was born of Irish descendants in Garryowen, Iowa, and she graduated from the Visitation Academy in Dubuque (which was rather rare for a woman at the turn of the century). Her obituary noted that she had "tenderly restored her children back to health." (Both of my mom's older sisters had recovered from the flu under her care.) Though my own mother never really remembered much about her mother, the loss left a deep impression upon her. Because Levina Rea Schwendinger eventually became my mother and because she was a woman of great grace, gentleness, and faith, she deeply influenced my life. I think I had a heartfelt grasp of what my grandmother's death meant to her family. Luckily, my mother's aunt, her father's maiden sister, moved in with the family for a few years to help the children grow beyond childhood. Aunt Mary was a wonderful and dearly loved surrogate mother.

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Today the Dubuque Franciscans have so far been spared the devastation of the 2020 pandemic. But we have felt its effects and its losses. Some of our families have been ill. Some have died. A few of our sisters have ventured into the homes of poor people in Mississippi and Honduras and brought much needed food. Others continued serving immigrants on our southern border. The congregation has contributed to minority populations that have been hit hard by the virus. The community donated the government funds each sister received for COVID-19 relief to assist with immediate needs for food and health assistance in places where our sisters serve or have connections. We have been so grateful for our nursing administrators and the staff at Mount St. Francis Center who have been so deliberate and professional in keeping us well and safe. We have been more than happy to provide additional hazard pay to our caregivers and offer little incentives that daily say our thanks. We sisters have missed our friends and our families. We have bowed patiently to the regulations imposed because of the virus (Well, mostly!) We have found creative ways to find meaning in the “poverty” of the moment. As we wait out the virus, we write more letters, send out emails, make phone calls and even do virtual advocacy/political action. We have read lots of books, finished projects which have long been idle on the shelf, and fostered deeper relationships among ourselves. When the moments of loneliness and ennui settled in upon us, we searched for greater depth in contemplation and prayer. We try to see a spiritual calling hidden in the circumstances of the time.

2020 is not 1918 but it does rhyme in some ways. The experiences of the past somehow still connect us. History brought together Sister Mary Ruth Kane, Sister Eunice Mousel, Margaret Kinsella Rea, my own mother, myself, and now you, the reader of this article. In fact it brings together every Dubuque Franciscan who is alive and living in the difficult uncertainty of these days. We will tell its stories probably for the rest of our lives. Maybe they will come pouring out in the rhymes of a limerick, a sonnet, or even in iambic pentameter! Either way, Mark Twain will smile but he will not be surprised. ■

Dubuque Franciscans Release Statement on Racial Injustice

On June 4, the Dubuque Franciscans released the following statement following the tragic death of George Floyd on May 25 in Minneapolis, Minnesota:

The Sisters of St. Francis of Dubuque, Iowa call on our country to deal with the systemic racism that was evidenced by the murder of George Floyd. 8 minutes and 46 seconds! That's how long three police officers stood guard as Officer Derek Chauvin suffocated George Floyd to death. Our hearts are breaking as we mourn with his family and friends, and with all who have lost loved ones to law enforcement violence, all who live in fear, and all whose dignity is threatened. The continued killing of black women and men, the constant harassment of people of color, and the denial of rights must end now. We are also saddened that the Marshallese, African American, and Latino communities are disproportionately experiencing the effects of COVID-19. We oppose the systemic racism that has perpetuated these evils.

Racism has infected our nation since its founding. Until we address it, people of color will continue to die and our nation will not heal. Racism, whether institutional which privileges some at the expense of others or the daily acts of hate and discrimination, diminishes us all. Racism disregards the profound truth that all are created in the image and likeness of God. Every person is entitled to dignity and respect.

As women religious, we acknowledge our own complicity in institutional racism. We ask forgiveness of our sisters and brothers of color, and we pray for our nation's healing. We know that is not enough! It is time for bold, decisive action! We pledge to raise our voices and act courageously to address racism; we are called to live in right relationship and work towards creating a just and moral society. We are committed to the practice of peace and non-violence to transform hearts and minds. It is time to dismantle white privilege and rededicate ourselves to building God's beloved community.

Make a Tax-Free Gift with an IRA

Recently a friend asked me about her brother making a donation from his IRA. If you have an IRA (an “Individual Retirement Account”) and are 70½ years old or older, you can take advantage of this simple way to benefit charities and receive tax benefits in return.

You can give any amount, from \$100 up to \$100,000 per year from your IRA directly to a qualified charity without having to pay income taxes on the money. This popular gift option is commonly called the “IRA charitable rollover or a “qualified charitable distribution.”



There are a number of advantages for you to make a gift in this fashion:

- The transfer generates neither taxable income nor a tax deduction, so you benefit even if you do not itemize your deductions.
- You can use your gift to satisfy all or part of your required minimum distribution (RMD). (Note: The RMD requirement has been waived for 2020, per the CARES Act signed into law on March 27, 2020.)
- Since the gift doesn’t count as income to you, it can reduce your annual income level. This may help lower your Medicare premiums and decrease the amount of Social Security that is subject to tax.
- Contact your IRA custodian to complete the gift. It is also wise to consult with your tax professionals or legal advisor if you are contemplating a charitable gift of a sizeable nature.
- This can be a wonderful win-win for people who would rather gift to charity than pay taxes. Experts estimate that heirs receive less than 25% of most IRA assets that pass through estates. Direct gifts to a qualified charity can be made only from an IRA. Under certain circumstances, however, you may be able to roll assets from a pension, profit sharing, 401(k) or 403(b) plan into an IRA and then make the transfer from the IRA directly to your favorite charities.

Legal name: Sisters of St. Francis of Dubuque,
Iowa

Address: 3390 Windsor Ave., Dubuque, IA
52001-1311

Federal tax ID number: Please contact Sister
Cathy Katoski at (563) 564-9411 for our
federal tax ID number.

*Sister Cathy (Kate) Katoski, OSF
For the Sisters of St. Francis of Dubuque, IA*

I Want You

In March, Activities Director **Jennifer Hammerand** saw a campaign on social media called “I want you to know.” The campaign featured messages of hope and

positivity from nursing home residents who were in the midst of lockdowns due to the coronavirus pandemic. Jennifer sought to adapt the campaign for the Sisters of Francis.



Sister Dorothy Adams



Sister Marla Smith



Sister Donalda Kehoe



Sister Jeanine McDermott



Sister Marge Burkle



Sisters Marie Therese Kalb and Carol Hemesath

to Know

“I knew the sisters would have some fun with it and people could see the sisters were OK and they were hanging in there,” said Jennifer.

Jennifer asked the sisters to finish the sentence: “I want you to know” and the images were then shared on the

Dubuque Franciscans’ social media pages.

“When the comments came in and I showed them, that was really fun for them--especially when they saw messages from people they hadn’t heard from in a long time!” she added. ■



Sister Mary Arnold Staudt



Sisters Ann and Lene Rubly



Sister Susan Seitz



Sister Monica McMahon



Sister JoAnn Lohrman



Sister Edith Halbach

Along the way...

Sister Reyna Helen Badillo Renews Vows

Sister Reyna Helen Badillo renewed her vows on June 18 at a ceremony in Okolona, Mississippi.

Dubuque Franciscan **Sister Nancy Schreck** presided over the ceremony as Sister Reyna, who currently ministers in Okolona, renewed her vows for two more years.

“Thank you for your prayers and support,” said Sister Reyna. “I continue moving forward because your prayers.” ■



Sister Reyna Badillo signs the book of intentions as Sister Nancy Schreck and Sister Liz Brown, CSJ, look on. Contributed photo.

DBQ Franciscans Complete Solar Panel Project



The solar panels at Mount St. Francis Center.

Construction is complete on the Dubuque Franciscans' solar panel project. The 2,600 solar panels will power Clare House at Mount St. Francis Center.

Each panel generates 375 watts of electricity, for a grand total of 990,000 watts; the ground-mounted solar system will reduce Clare House's energy usage by 80%. ■



Goats Return to Mount St. Francis Center

The Dubuque Franciscan Sisters have again teamed up with Goats on the Go-Dubuque.

In June, 70 goats returned to Mount St. Francis Center to eat the weeds, specifically oriental bittersweet, thistle, and wild parsnip in another section of the Dubuque Franciscans' prairie.

Peg Harbaugh of Goats on the Go-Dubuque discovered something new about her goats as they worked on eating the wild parsnips from the Dubuque Franciscans' prairie.

“I discovered how fascinating these animals are because those plants grow very tall and there's a lot of it [at Mount St. Francis Center] and they're leaving a little patch once in awhile,” said Peg in an interview on KDTH's “Voices of the Tri-States.”

“I was absolutely amazed why they were leaving stalks of this plant only to discover inside was a nest. Goats are beautiful animals and they do a great job and they naturally protect.” ■

In Remembrance

Sister Mona Wingert April 17, 1927 - March 17, 2020



On Easter Sunday, 1927, George and Lioba (Kraut) Wingert welcomed their fourth daughter in Raymond,

Iowa, and called her Lioba Remigia after her mother and a cousin.

After graduation from St. Mary's, Lioba attended Teachers' College in Cedar Falls for 12 weeks, earning a temporary teaching certificate. For a year, she was an assistant teacher in the Raymond school, taking her turn starting the fire in the winter mornings.

During the summer, Lioba went to Washington, D.C., with her sister, Mary, and typed for three lawyers in

the Office of Price Administration. In the fall, she returned to Raymond. Lioba knew she was being called to religious life.

At her reception on August 12, 1946, Lioba was given the name, Sister Mary Mona. After final profession in 1948, she was missioned at Holy Trinity in Dubuque, teaching kindergarten in the mornings and PE for children in grades 1-6 in the afternoons. On January 28, 1955, Sister Mona's mother died at age 56. This was the first death in her immediate family and came as a great shock to her.

Sister Mona also taught kindergarten and fourth through eighth grades at St. Mary of the Woods in Chicago, and was principal and superior for the Sisters. Following this, she was elected to congregational leadership as

Regional Coordinator when the community first went to that governance model. Sister Mona then returned to education, serving four years as principal at St. Edward's in Waterloo before she was hired as an Associate in the Archdiocese of Dubuque Education Office.

In 1986, Sister became Assistant Superintendent of Education in the Diocese of Charlotte, North Carolina. Her sixteen years in Charlotte gave her a chance to be with her brother John, his wife, and his children and grandchildren.

Sister Mona retired to Mount St. Francis in 2002 and moved to Clare House in 2017. Sister is survived by her sister, Sister Jolene Wingert; her sisters-in-law, Jean Wingert and Catherine (Kitty) Wingert; nieces, nephews, and Franciscan sisters. ■

Sister Consilia Schoenherr July 24, 1920 - May 18, 2020



On July 24, 1920 Mike and Elizabeth (Zeimen) Schoenherr welcomed the fourth child of the family and

named her Beatrice Mary, born on the farm north of Mapleton, Iowa.

Beatrice attended school at St. Mary's Catholic school in Mapleton for eight years and graduated with honors and was mentioned on the Monona County honor roll. Beatrice then entered Mapleton Consolidated High School. After graduation she attended Western Union College in LeMars and received a teaching certificate. Her teaching career began in a County

School north of Mapleton and after two years she then moved to another County School north of Ute, Iowa.

On August 25, 1946, Beatrice entered the Dubuque Franciscans and in the following year on August 10, 1949, she was received into the Franciscan community and given the name Sister Mary Consilia, in honor of the Mother of Good Counsel.

Sister Mary Consilia's ministry began with teaching in Iowa schools, St. Joseph, Earlville, St. Anthony, Hospers, St. Martin, Odebolt, St. Michael, Norway, St. Joseph, Bode, and St. Athanasius, Jesup, and two schools in Illinois, St. Anne, Hazel Crest, and St. Christopher, Midlothian. Sister's last years of teaching was spent at

Heelan High School in Sioux City, teaching Developmental Reading to ninth graders. In 1998 Sister Consilia retired to Mount St. Francis and in 2012 moved to Clare House. ■

Rest in Peace

Eleanor Hohensee
Mother of Sister Renae Hohensee

Harold "Pete" Schaaf
Brother-in-law of Sisters Clara and Denise Streng

Lorena Kivlahan
Sister-in-law of Sr. Mary Kivlahan

Joan Hamilton
Sister of Sisters Clara and Denise Streng

Roger Ginder
Brother of Sister Edna Ginder

Rita (Rolling) Beshey
Sister of Sister Theresa Rolling

Rita Bemis
Sister of Sisters Anthony and Mary Ann Wagner

In Remembrance

Sister Lou Ann Kilburg September 12, 1943 - July 13, 2020



Lou Ann was born to Nick and Frances (Clausen) Kilburg on September 12, 1943, on their farm southwest of Bellevue,

Iowa.

On September 3, 1961, Lou Ann entered the community and in the following year on August 10, 1962, she was received and given the name Sister Mary Aquilene.

Sister Lou Ann started teaching students at St. Mary's and Holy Ghost in Dubuque, Sacred Heart in Monticello, and Niles, Illinois. In the summers of the mid 70s, she

volunteered in the Dubuque Franciscans' Common Venture program and went to the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. Along with team members, she worked in the small villages of Allen, Kyle, Wounded Knee, and Wanblee. From August of 1978 to 1986 Sister served as a member of the Pastoral Team in the villages of St. Frances, Parmelee, Mission, and Okreek, South Dakota.

In September of 1989, Sister Lou Ann was appointed as Parish Administrator Intern for St. Joseph's Parish in Clements, Minnesota. In 1993, after much prayer and discernment, Sister resigned and accepted a position as pastoral minister on the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota. She enjoyed working with the Lakota people. They taught her many important

lessons for living in harmony with the earth. After 14 years living on the Reservation, she moved to Lower Brule, South Dakota. Due to the excessive dust on the reservation, which seriously affected her health, Sister Lou Ann accepted a position as Pastoral Administrator in 2003 for St. Peter's Church, Sabula, Iowa. In 2011 the parish closed and she moved to Dubuque and took a position as Senior Care Giver for Home Instead until her retirement in 2017.

Sister is survived by her sisters Norma (David) Sieverding and Judy Moran; brothers Arlin (Bernice) Kilburg and Donald (Viola) Kilburg; sister-in-law Mary Kilburg; nieces and nephews; and her Franciscan sisters. ■

Human Trafficking Coalition Celebrates Passage of Bill

Members of the Tri-State Coalition Against Human Trafficking and Slavery, which includes Dubuque Franciscan Sisters and Associates, are celebrating the unanimous passage of a bill by the Iowa Legislature and its signing into law by Gov. Kim Reynolds on June 29.

The bill, HF 2259, stipulates that, beginning in 2022, any hotel or motel doing business with the State of Iowa – including the hosting of meetings – must be able to certify that its staff has received training on how to recognize and address the signs of human trafficking. It specifies the components of the training program and that certification must be publicly displayed by each hotel and motel trained.

“Our Coalition has actively promoted this bill with our legislators since January 2019, after it was introduced by Representatives Chuck Isenhardt and Lindsay James,” said Dubuque Franciscan **Sister Mary Lechtenberg**, chair of the Coalition.

“Its passage will limit traffickers from using some hotels and motels to profit from the destruction of the lives of women, men, girls and boys.”

The Coalition began training employees of area lodgings in December 2018, and has completed training in eight area lodging facilities to date, with others slated for training once the coronavirus pandemic recedes.

“The passage of this bill will give added importance and impetus to our efforts,” she said.

Area legislators Representatives Chuck Isenhardt, Lindsay James and Shannon Lundgren and Senators Pam Jochum and Carrie Koelker all voted for the measure. During this session, HF 2259 was co-sponsored by Rep. Jerry Mohr of Scott County. “We are most grateful for their support and commitment to helping Iowa become a trafficking-free state,” Sister Mary said.

The Tri-State Coalition Against Trafficking and Slavery (Iowa, Wisconsin and Illinois) engages in education and advocacy to eradicate human trafficking. Members cooperate with other area organizations with similar goals. The Coalition is a member of US Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking, and has a member on the board of the Iowa Network Against Human Trafficking. ■

Dubuque Franciscans 2020-2026 Leadership Team Installed



From left to right: Sisters Kate Katoski, Kathy Knipper, Pat Clemen, Mary Lechtenberg, Maureen Leach, Brenda Whetstone, and Marie Cigrand. Photo by Sister Phyllis Manternach.

On Sunday, May 31, 2020, the Dubuque Franciscans' 2020-2026 Leadership Team was installed at the Transition of Leadership Service at Mount St. Francis Center.

Members of the new leadership team are **Sisters Kathy Knipper**, president; and **Sisters Pat Clemen, Maureen Leach, and Brenda Whetstone**, vice presidents. **Sister Cathy (Kate) Katoski**, served as past president; and **Sisters Kathy Knipper, Marie Cigrand and Mary Lechtenberg** served as vice presidents from 2014-2020.

The theme of the installation service was "Empowered by our Common Heart." Each member of the new Leadership Team was given a heart shaped container dish made of onyx.

In her reflection, **Sister Kathy Lentsch** addressed the new team and encouraged them to find strength in their community.

"The congregation called you forth to this time and space. There are gifts you were born to give to us and to share with other congregations and the

world," said Sister Kathy. "You have perspectives, insights and wisdom to lead us into whatever is next. And when you grow weary or afraid, pause, breathe, and remember the collective discernment that brought you to this role. When you feel uncertain in yourself, trust in the group that called you forth."

During the service, the community thanked the outgoing Leadership Team for their years of service. "God of love and blessings, we lift our hearts to you on this day of transfer of leadership in our congregation," read **Sister Rita Goedken**. "We offer praise and gratitude to you, Sisters Kate, Kathy, Marie and Mary, who have faithfully answered your call to leadership these past six years in our congregation."

Sisters Kathy, Pat, Maureen, and Brenda were elected during the community's Chapter of Elections, December 27-31, 2019 at Shalom Spirituality Center in Dubuque. ■



Clean Water Vital in the Fight Against COVID-19



Villagers rejoice after the installation of SWP well #265 in Michungwani, population 2,000. SWLD includes water stations (white bucket to the left of the pump) next to all SWP wells for villagers to wash their hands before and after pumping water. Contributed photo.

Working with partners Safe Water for Life and Dignity (SWLD) in Tanzania, the Sister Water Project (SWP) completed the installation of wells #255 through #269 in March, April, May and June 2020. **James Nyangas** of SWLD wrote to the Sister Water Committee in March about the importance of clean water in the fight against COVID-19.

“Since our people are poor, a majority of them lack financial means to buy the scientifically approved chemicals, disinfectants, and sanitizers,” said James. “Clean water for the poor is considered the only major weapon against the novel coronavirus. This is where we see triple the need for clean water.”

Noticing how the water pumps are constantly

being touched by villagers, SWLD began installing water stations with soap at each well so villagers could wash their hands before and after pumping water.

“SWLD decided to donate the water stations to double the efforts of SWP toward preventing the spread of the virus,” wrote James. “We thought it is a good thing as it would help focus on the hygiene of the hands that use the hand pumps.

Each villages’ water committee will be responsible for making sure the dispensers are filled with soap and water.

“The SWP wells provide clean water which is a great base not only in the fight against the coronavirus but for other health issues, too,” said James. ■