



Sisters of
St. Francis
of Assisi

NOJOSHING

FALL 2022 VOLUME 36 • NUMBER 4

Notes

Sounds of Thanksgiving



The Sisters gathered outside St. Francis Convent for the blessing ceremony. At right, drummer Jahmes led the group.

Imagine the sound of bongo and congo, rain stick and thunder-shake, kalimba and cymbal, plus a few overturned buckets and a water jug! These instruments inspired sounds that filled the convent grounds on July 13, 2022, when local performing artist and teacher Jahmes Finlayson led a gathering of about 30 resident and non-resident Sisters and friends. They formed a drum circle to give thanks for the land on which we stand and the abundance of our gardens. Sister Barbara Faris opened the program reminding us that Earth is our Mother whom we love and return to; we must protect her from harm. The group acknowledged the indigenous people who came before us on this land—the Menominee, Kickapoo, Potawatomi, and Ho-Chunk/

Winnebago Nations. Sister Helene Mertes offered a poetic blessing giving thanks for all of God's creation that nurtures our souls and provides for our bodies. Soil, seedlings and sprouts, plants and trees, pollinators and even pests, each play a part. We are grateful for one and all. As a workshop facilitator and teacher in the School of Continuing Education at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Jahmes brought his teaching skills to the gathering as he led the group with spirit and enthusiasm. The program culminated with his drumming direction. Each person in the circle fell into rhythm with African words and stories, Native American beats, and the unity of our hearts together in thanksgiving.

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NOJOSHING is an Indian word. It means "Straight Tongue." In 1849, the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi built their Motherhouse on land that was called Nojoshing by the Indians, because it protrudes out into Lake Michigan like a straight tongue.

JUBILARIANS REFLECT ON THEIR MINISTRIES AND

Here are the thoughts of the Jubilarians as they looked back on their lives of service and commitment as Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi.

Sister Helen Svancarek

I am deeply grateful to God for all the gifts and blessings He has given me. I feel so blessed! I trust God will continue to be always at my side, guiding me, blessing me, and loving me with His unconditional love.



Sister Verna Kayser



Sister Rose Marie Kruse

Sister Catherine Badem

As a Sister of St. Francis of Assisi, I have had the determination to never give up on myself or others in need. I answered the call to serve others where needed – as a teacher, a domestic worker for the Sisters ministering at Cardinal Stritch College, and a support person to Administration and the students of St. Mary's Academy.

My prayer life has deepened over the years. I have come to know Jesus at the foot of the cross and I practice contemplation and appreciate being present to God before the Holy Tabernacle. I pray daily for others in need. Jesus is Presence as a Precious "Gift of Finest Wheat." I receive affirmation that is offered to us. I receive affirmation through the Art Therapy Ministry offered to us, helping me successfully and prayerfully.



Sister Genevieve Van Driel

I have been grateful all my religious life for my vocation. As I grew up, it never occurred to me to become a Sister. When the thought came to me in high school, I immediately pushed it away. I could never be a Sister!

But, God had other plans for me. God sent his Holy Spirit to help me know what He wanted me to do. After that, whenever I was asked to do what I thought I could not do, I would remember that God wanted me to do it.

I have met some wonderful people over the years and hopefully I have been able to help some of them.

Thank you, Father, for helping me to change my mind and letting you lead me!

I am deeply grateful to God for all the gifts and blessings He has given me. I feel so blessed! I trust God will continue to be always at my side, guiding me, blessing me, and loving me with His unconditional love.



Sister Mary Jeanne Michels

As a Sister of St. Francis of Assisi, I have had the joy of meeting in ministry wonderful people, from all walks of life.

God has blessed me, and I am most grateful, for a loving family, wholesome friends, and good health. The Franciscan Spirit of simplicity and peacemaking has been an ongoing inspiration for me.



FRANCISCAN WAY OF LIFE

Sister Mary Lou Schramer

Entering Community, I had no idea what my life would become. Throughout the years, my vast opportunities have taken me from food service, to working with mentally challenged, to nursing and administration. Following that, I had an opportunity to get back to my roots: farming – my ministry at a retreat center for 12½ years was nursing, food service, helping with calving, driving the tractor and gardening.

Throughout the years, I had the opportunity to work with Habitat for Humanity.

I knew when it was time to move on, only to be at St. Coletta, where I worked with clients and teenage boys and girls who had to do community service because they got in trouble with the law. (Tasks: gardening, cleaning out buildings, repairing furniture, serving formal dinners to staff and clients.)

Hobbies: gardening, woodworking, and preparing food.

I was blessed with 2½ years helping take care of my mother as she ended her journey. Since then I have been ministering at Clare Hall (retirement facility) and presently I am coordinator at our new health facility.

Each move was a new call and they have been wonderful and blessed years.



Sister Rosalia Vadala

An ever-unfolding adventure! I thank God for choosing me, knocking me off my horse (figuratively) as I stood on the outer steps of St. Francis Xavier Jesuit Church in New York City in the year 1960. Thank you to the past leaderships of our Franciscan Sisters of Baltimore and the leaderships of the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi for allowing me to fulfill a call to serve the Spanish-speaking poor – a call given to me in my infancy.



Sister Maria Lee

Sister Linda Greenwood

Many of our Sisters have been an inspiration for me. I never attended a Catholic school. At a young age of seven, on my First Communion day, I simply fell in love with God and wanted to give my all to that love.

Our Sisters have shown me by their lives a variety of ways to live out this life and it has given me the courage to respond to my call. I want to say thank you to God, to our Sisters and Associates, to my family, and to all who have helped me become the Franciscan woman religious I am today, as I celebrate 50 years professed.

“Golden” 50 years ... what lies ahead ... I will trust ... I will continue to say YES ... Amen!



Sister Barbara Barry

My spiritual journey has been unique. Although my life in community has been short, the call to religious life was always there. As I left high school, I knew the Spirit was calling me. But circumstances made it impossible to enter.

As part of the laity, I led a very faithful life with my husband and children. After my husband's death, I knew the Spirit was still calling me.

The Franciscan Sisters of Baltimore welcomed me with open arms. I brought with me many years of life experiences. In return, the Sisters showed me how deeply the Holy Spirit loved me by introducing me to my ministry to the poor.



Rejoice!

Cookies and Prayer

There is nothing like a homemade cookie to bring a smile to one's face! On August 25, 2022, Sisters Mary Hau, Mary Jerome Lacy, Genevieve Van Driel, Jodene Wydeven, and Rosalynn Dzikonski baked eight dozen of Sister Mary's special oatmeal chocolate chip cookies for StreetLife Communities' outreach. For the past 20 years, StreetLife has served people experiencing homelessness. They serve a "shelter-resistant" population who live on the streets, many struggling with addiction or mental health troubles. With food and outdoor survival gear, they minister as a first contact to build relationships and hope.

After baking, the Sisters prayed a blessing for the cookie recipients before sending them off for distribution. What a wonderful way to reach out to persons in need with a delicious homemade cookie and a prayer!



Apple Party Time



With the coming of autumn, one sees apple trees are loaded with ripe fruit waiting to be picked. It is the season of apple parties at St. Francis Convent! On October 6, 2022, six students from Cardinal Stritch University, Milwaukee, Wis., joined Sisters from Elizabeth Hall to help peel, core, and quarter the abundance of apples harvested this year from the convent orchard. The young women were participating in a service day that also saw two other students accompanying Sisters for walks in Convent Park on a lovely autumn morning.

Over 80 bushels of apples were picked this year, a big increase from last year's yield. Some 30 bushels will be sent to a local processor to be pressed for apple juice (resulting in 100 gallons of juice!), and the rest will be used by the convent kitchen for baked goods and applesauce. The Sisters and the students enjoyed working together in this annual fall ritual.



What Happened to Sister Marcia Lunz?

Inquiring minds want to know what happened to Sister Marcia. After devoting 14 years of her life as a writer for our direct mail publications, Sister Marcia decided to retire from this role. We thank her for her many years of sharing the lives and ministry of the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi with all of you. We wish her all the best in retirement and know that she will enjoy having time to devote to her love of quilting. We welcome Sister Mary Kemen, whom Sister Marcia has been mentoring for three years, as our writer for donor communications.



P.S. Donate today and your gift **will be matched, dollar-for-dollar**, by two very special friends of the Sisters — The Molitor Foundation and We Energies Foundation— now through May 28, 2023. Your \$25 gift will be worth \$50 and \$100 gift worth \$200.

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