



Sisters of  
St. Francis  
of Assisi



# NOJOSHING NOTES

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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.*

## Celebrating Jubilee – Celebrating Fidelity 23 Sisters Recognized for Milestones

**A**t a special Liturgy on July 26, 23 sisters publicly celebrated 75, 70, 60 and 50 years of faith-filled living as vowed members of the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi. Their lives are lives of fidelity.

Many years ago, in working with a group of 8th grade girls who were interpreting the lyrics of a song, the word "fidelity" was new to them and they questioned what it meant. The lyrics were a paraphrase of Psalm 23 and have meaning today for our Sister Jubilarians.

*The Lord is my shepherd; I shall want nothing. He leads me to rest in green fields; He leads me always on the path of fidelity to waters of cool refreshment.\**



At left: (l to r) 50-Year Jubilarians Helene Mertes, Evelyn Brokish and Rita Schlumpberger prepare to process into the Jubilee Liturgy.

Right: Sr. Kimberli Lawrence assists 75-Year Jubilarian Demetria Ziegler.

Our Sister Jubilarians, as well as married couples or anyone else intent on doing a job well, know that fidelity is a daily endeavor. Fidelity is built on the past. One cannot project fidelity into the future except to strive to live faithfully. Only in the present can we see how each day has contributed to being faithful.



Sr. Helene Mertes wrote the following account to send to friends in Ohio where she and Sr. Elaine Weber, another Golden Jubilarian, just completed 16 years of ministry at St. John's Villa, a facility for developmentally disabled persons. She expresses well how the past laid the foundation for this day of celebration.

*JUBILEE - words cannot express the feelings of joy and gratitude felt that day, surrounded by the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi, wonderful friends and family. With humility, we are honored to have served in various ways with many persons for 50 wonderful years.*

*Continued inside*

## “These years have been richly blessed....”



The Jubilee celebration included two sisters who have served in the community for 75 years, four sisters served for 70 years and eight sisters served for 60 years. Sr. Elaine and

I, with six other classmates, made up the 50 year Golden Jubilee group.

We committed ourselves many years ago to follow the gospel of Jesus Christ in communion with the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi and to their mission in the church. We proclaim to be **‘women of faith touching a world in need.’** These years have been richly blessed, not only for ourselves but for the many persons that we have touched and their gifts that have enhanced our lives.

Above: (left) **Sr. Elaine Weber** (50 Years) is joined by Sr. Carol Mechtenberg, who marked her 50th anniversary in 2007.

Below: (left) 50-Year Jubilarians **Evelyn Brokish** (l) and **Barbara Kenney** (r) spend a moment together.

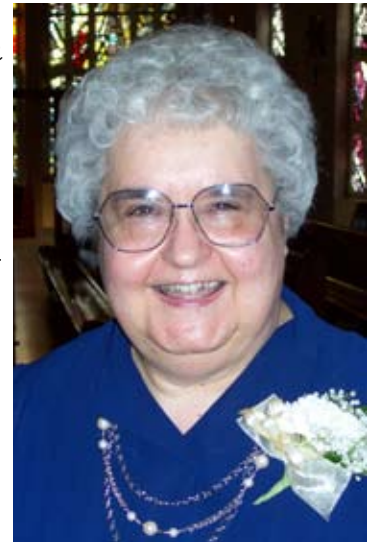
At right: (l to r) are **Sisters Patricia McAlpin** (50 Years) and **Bernadette Grabrian** (60 Years).



On July 26, 2009, the celebration began with an inspiring Mass held at St. Rita Parish in Milwaukee, since our convent chapel on Lake Drive is too small to accommodate everyone celebrating with us. Each Jubilarian processed in while the sisters’ choir sang, accompanied by organ and violin. (Some of the music sung during Mass was composed by

a classmate of ours [Sr. Evelyn Brokish].) Fr. Al Veik, OFM Cap, a long time friend of the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi, was the presider and preached the homily. After the homily, the Jubilarians and all of the OSF sisters present renewed their vows of poverty, consecrated celibacy and obedience.

A reception followed at Serb Hall, which is not far from the church. Sisters, friends and family came to congratulate each celebrant. As we celebrate this jubilee, we remember God’s profound faithfulness to us, the blessed times, the fun and relationships that we have had and continue to experience.



**Sr. Rose Marie Dielen** (50 Years)



# “Through it all I have felt God supporting me.”



At left: (l to r) Sr. Joanne Nicgorski poses with 70-Year Jubilarian **Marie Ritzke**.

At right: **Sr. Marita Maschmann** (l) shares her 60-Year Jubilee with her two sisters.



Right: **Sr. JoAnn Schmitz** (50 Years)  
Below: **Sr. Mary Ann O’Deay** (60 Years)



If you look at the photos of the Sister Jubilarians, you can see in each face a joyful spirit and a peace-filled presence. The path of fidelity is seldom an easy path, but our God who loves us with an everlasting love, is a faithful God in whom we can trust to lead us. In their own words.....

*Sr. Evelyn Brokish: I believe that Fidelity is a response to the inner promptings of the Spirit. Attentiveness to those promptings invites me into the Canticle of Creation where there is peace and all good. I was mindful of the love, humility and peace that prevailed when doing my part in the liturgy preparations for Jubilee and when composing the responsorial psalm, “God Feeds Us.” Listening and welcoming the Spirit is the way!*

*Sr. Bernadette Grabrian: Sixty years of vowed life seems like yesterday. Through it all I have felt God supporting me. Because of this, I have felt God’s peace and joy. Jubilee time is when I could share everything with my relatives and friends.*

*Sr. Margaret Ann Recker: Prayer, obedience, dependence on the Holy Spirit, love, trust, thankfulness to God for giving me the idea to be a Sister – all these contribute to fidelity. I thank Jesus for everything, even when things don’t go right.*

*Sr. Philip Neri Bichler: Fidelity lies in prayer and work. It is a day by day effort.*

Right: **Sr. Maria Regina Rodriguez** (60 Years) gives her feet a break from her dress shoes!  
Below: (60-Years) Sisters **Margaret Ann Recker** (l) and **Philip Neri Bichler** (r) were the gift bearers.



\* “A Banquet is Prepared” by John Kavanaugh, S. J.

# Co-Founded Congregations Mark 160 Years

This year marks the 160th Anniversary as a Congregation. From July 31 to August 2, 2009, the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi, the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration (La Crosse, Wis.) and the Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist (Meriden, Conn.) met in La Crosse to celebrate our common foundation. During the course of the years, three separate congregations have emerged, and since 1989 we have gathered every 10 years to celebrate our common roots.



Sr. Catherine Morrissey (l) and Sr. Jeanne d'Arc Omilan (r) take a stand up break during the Peace Conference in La Crosse, Wis.

Our celebration also included the Tertiary Sisters of St. Francis whose Motherhouse is in northern Italy. However, our primary connection with them is through their Province in Cameroon, Africa. A little more than 10 years ago we began a Common Venture with these sisters in which we work for mutual learning and understanding in the course of building relationships.

As an outgrowth of our Common Venture, all four congregations have done some work with a Cultural Audit to deepen our understanding and acceptance of cultural variations.

At the Cultural Audit Gathering on July 31, we shared the eight values each congregation holds as most influential at this time



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and found that there is a great commonality among us. We reflected with Tom Thibodeau, a Professor at Viterbo University, on U. S. cultural values and later wrote contemporary parables to illustrate how our values can be put into action in today's society.

On August 1, a Peace Conference featured speakers from across the globe addressing how we can be peacemakers. More information from both of these days can be found at [www.franciscancommonventure.org](http://www.franciscancommonventure.org)

On Sunday morning, the celebration came to a close with a Liturgy and brunch. Energized and renewed, sisters returned home knowing that Francis' example of prayer, good example, loving deeds and systemic action is still very relevant today.

## Jubilarian Comeback!

Last year Sr. Mariella Boehmer celebrated her 60th Jubilee in a wheelchair. On the Thursday before Jubilee, she participated in the St. Ben's Walk at German Fest in Milwaukee. This walk benefits the meal program that the parish runs at the northwest edge of the downtown area. During the walk, Sr. Mariella broke her ankle and had to be assisted back to the starting line. Sr. Lois Justen stepped up to the challenge and loaned Sr. Mariella her walker, which is equipped with a seat, and pushed her back for medical assistance.

(lower right)



Undaunted by the events of the past, Sr. Mariella walked again this year, completed the course and won a medal in her age category! (at left)



Congratulations, Sr. Mariella, on your medal and for your example of perseverance!