



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.

Congregation Is Treasure of the Church

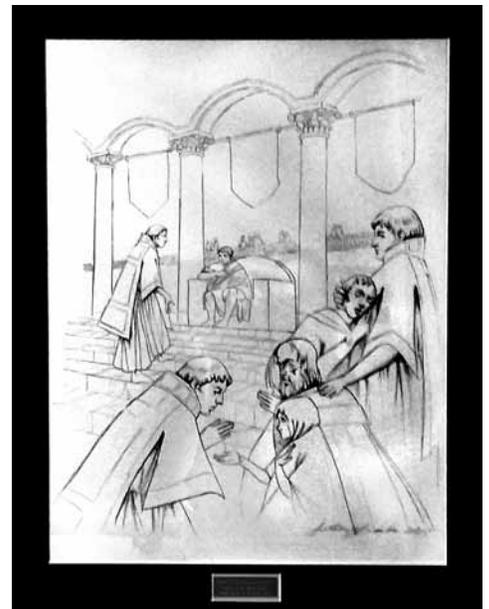
Milwaukee's Archbishop Jerome ListECKI established the **Treasures of the Church** award this year, 2015. Its purpose is to recognize those individuals, organizations and religious orders who exemplify the true treasures of the church in their steadfast commitment and response to the poor in our midst in imitation of St. Lawrence of Rome (c. 225-258). The Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi is the first religious order chosen for this award. It was presented during a simple Lenten Luncheon of soup and bread at St. Francis de Sales Seminary on February 24, 2015.

St. Lawrence was born in Spain and, as a young deacon, was among the seven deacons appointed to serve in the patriarchal church as "Archdeacon of Rome." This was a position of great trust because it meant he was in charge of the care of the treasury and riches of the church as well as the distribution of alms to the poor.

At that time, Roman authorities executed Christians who had been denounced, and then confiscated their goods. In 258, an edict was issued by emperor Valerian to execute all clergy. After Pope Sixtus II was executed, Lawrence was ordered to turn over all the riches of the church. It is said that Lawrence asked for three days to do this and used this time to distribute as much of the church's goods to the poor as he could.

On the third day, when the Roman prefect demanded that Lawrence give up the riches, he presented persons who were poor, crippled, blind and suffering, declaring that these were the true treasures of the Church. He made it a point to emphasize that the church was far richer than the emperor. Lawrence was burned alive for his act of defiance.

The award is a drawing (pictured below) by Rev. Anthony J. Brankin of the Archdiocese of Chicago showing St. Lawrence presenting the poor of Rome to the prefect. Archbishop ListECKI, in presenting the award to Sr. Florence Deacon, said, "The religious community receiving the **Treasure of the Church Award** is the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi. Their presence in the archdiocese almost mirrors the creation of the archdiocese itself. They have been involved in every aspect of charitable and



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Living Out Our Congregation Mission:

One of the goals of the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi in living out our Mission is: **To bring the healing, teaching, reconciling and liberating power of Jesus into the human situations in which we live and minister.**

Today, when we think about teaching opportunities, there are a great variety of ways in which we do that.

One example is the Land Use Committee, which is very active in education. Its scope of activities ranges from helping volunteers recognize garlic mustard as they help with eradicating this invasive plant, to sponsoring a series of talks in the Earth Echoes educational series. These sessions began in January of 2015, and are held on the third Thursday of the month from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. at Clare Hall.

The first of the presentations for Earth Echoes was held in January and featured Sister Mary Lea Schneider, who spoke on *The Greening of Religion*. Sister Mary Lea was president of Cardinal Stritch University for 17 years, and is now a half-time faculty member. Currently she teaches a number of courses in the Religious Studies Department at Stritch.

In her presentation, she discussed the many environmental issues and concerns for the 21st century, and how religious teachings and beliefs and care of the earth are intimately connected. A number of websites were identified which are relevant to both environmental issues and to the religious responses to those issues. The importance of trees in varied religious traditions formed the backdrop for a discussion about trees which also included an economic view of their value. Accessing several websites, Sr. Mary Lea demonstrated the way in which the natural capital (goods and services) of a tree can be calculated and expressed in dollars and cents.

A website showing the types of pollution present in the Great Lakes was also looked at by the group. Today's multi-faceted environmental destruction, as well

as the global climate change concern, led to the question of how – and if – Christian tradition(s) can address these pressing issues. Sr. Mary Lea will continue her talk in April with *The Greening of Religion, Part II*.

The website of the Alliance of Religions and Conservation, www.arcworld.org, gives the basic beliefs and environmental teachings of the world's religions, as well as current environmental projects that religious traditions are pursuing.

In February, Sister Helene Mertes and Ted Mueller, who is retired from the Milwaukee Forestry Department, gave a presentation on the wetland and on the newly planted urban forest.

The Motherhouse property of the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi has a western boundary which forms a wetland. Duck Creek was clearly defined on maps drawn in the 19th century. Photos and paintings of the Motherhouse prior to 1960 show a fair amount of running water – enough for the sisters' cows to drink as they grazed the land.

Two and a half acres of the Motherhouse property is now "home" to a wetland (an area sometimes saturated by seasonal water and with an ecosystem), that is the remnant of the once vigorous Duck Creek. The land was overgrown with invasive plants (shown below) after the creek had been diverted underground by the city of Milwaukee in the 1960s. In the last three



Land Use Committee Reclaims, Educates

years, Sister Helene Mertes, the OSF Land Use Committee, and over 40 volunteers have worked vigorously to reclaim the wetlands and restore native plants and trees to the acreage. (The image below shows one reclaimed area that overflows with the bright flowers of the yellow biden when it is in bloom. Other areas now display additional species native to the wetland.)

The March session, *Everyday Miracles of Field and Meadow*, was presented by Sr. Mary Ann Polasek, former dean of the School of Arts and Sciences at Cardinal Stritch University. On the one hand, the focus of her talk was an explanation of the role of pollinators, such as bees and butterflies, in the spread of pollen and the resulting fruition of plants. Bees and butterflies have incredibly complex eye structures that enable them to be “directed” toward particular plants and toward the nectar portion of the plant. While feeding from the nectar, they spread the pollen. On the other hand, Sister conveyed a sense of wonder and appreciation for the evolutionary process, which can evoke a contemplative spirit in us, when we know more and more about the specifics of creation.

Wisconsin Wetlands Presentation

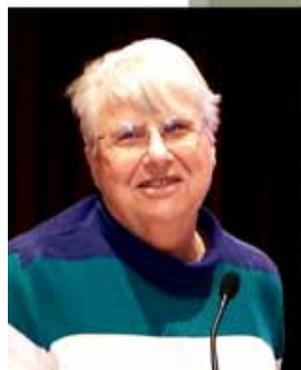
On February 26, Sister Helene (pictured at bottom right) also presented a session that described the fruits of the restoration process for attendees at the



annual Wisconsin Wetlands Association Conference. The conference, held at the Monona Terrace Convention Center, Madison, Wisconsin, brought together experts in wetlands science and those with experience repairing wetlands in the state.

Sister Helene’s illustrated presentation showed the process, results, and conclusions about the restoration of the OSF wetland. She briefly referenced information gleaned from a 2009 land assessment report, the plan developed by the OSF Land Use Committee, official recognition of the area as wetland by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, research on the process of restoration, and her acquisition of the pesticide applicators license for Wisconsin wetlands to remove Japanese knotweed, which overpowered a good portion of the land.

The before and after photos are amazing. They show the transformation of an aesthetically unpleasing area with a limited population of birds, insects and butterflies, to a wetland with biodiversity in its ecosystem. Come see the wetlands and sit on one of the handmade benches to meditate on the beauty!



Treasure of the Church *continued from Pg. 1*

educational outreach. They continue, to this day, their support for charitable works. If there is a social concern, the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi are there fulfilling the mandate of their founder. Their order is a true treasure.”

Other award recipients were Ann Marie Wick, who has worked for Catholic Charities since 1997, and Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare’s St. Joseph Campus, which has served the people of Milwaukee, particularly the underserved clients, for 130 years with compassion and expert health care.

Please remember the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi in your will.

A bequest is a wonderful way to support our retired sisters and is a testimony of your care and concern for them.

To make donations, order our cards & reach us via e-mail, visit:

WWW.LAKEOSFS.ORG/GIVING/GIVING.ASP

Nojoshing Notes is a publication of the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi. Please send comments / suggestions to: Nojoshing Notes Editor, Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi, 3221 S. Lake Dr., St. Francis, WI 53235-7193 or e-mail: jparrott@lakeosfs.org

2015 Musical Celebration

In keeping with the declaration of Pope Francis, the third annual concert featuring women and men religious of the Milwaukee Archdiocese was entitled *In Joyful Hope: A Musical Celebration in the Year of Consecrated Life*. This took place on March 27, at 7 p.m. in the chapel at St. Joseph Convent in Milwaukee.

Nearly 70 sisters, brothers and priests, six of whom were OSFs, participated in the concert. The Chapel Singers of the School Sisters of St. Francis opened the program with two songs. The massed choir, under the direction of Charles Q. Sullivan and accompanied by Sister Mary Jane Wagner, SSSF, performed eight selections. Flute, violin, trumpet, hand bells and percussion were featured in some of the selections. The program also included instrumental solos on the organ and violin, and a schola piece, *Seek the Lord*, under the direction of Roc O’Connor, S.J.

The texts of the songs centered on dedication to God through love and service. The concert ended with *Seek to Serve* by Lloyd Pfautsch. It is a prayer that everyone can pray:

May I live in the world as one who always seeks to serve.
May I live as one who knows the love of God.
Lord, teach me how to live and how to serve.
With my ears may I hear.
With my eyes may I see.
With my lips may I speak.
May your Word be heard through me.
Thus as I live each day, may love sustain the will to serve. Amen.

OSF participants in the choir:
(LEFT TO RIGHT - BACK)
Sisters Adele Thibaudeau, Ann Kelley & Marcia Lunz.

(LEFT TO RIGHT - FRONT)
Sisters Donna Siegl, Rose Sevenich & Gabrielle Kowalski.

