



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.

Feast of St. Francis: A Celebration to Remember

Each year the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi celebrate the Feast of St. Francis on the Sunday closest to October 4, the actual feast day. This year on October 1, 2017, sisters, associates, former members and guests gathered for dinner at noon at St. Francis Convent. The Troubadour room was decorated in a fall theme and the energy of greetings, hugs and conversations among those attending was palpable.

Francis traditionally greeted those he met with the phrase, "Pax et Bonum." This translates to "Peace and all good." While that phrase wasn't actually used, there was no doubt that everyone wanted only the best for each other.

At 1:30 p.m., all gathered in St. Francis Chapel for Mass. The environment of flowers and plants came from our own gardens. The choir, along with the congregation, filled the chapel with song. Fr. Al Veik, OFM, Cap., presided at the Liturgy. We renewed our commitment to the Franciscan Vision of Life,



and our prayer together strengthened our resolve to be 'instruments of peace' going forward. It was a celebration to be remembered.



21 OSF Jubilarians Celebrate a Total of 1,230

Each year, Jubilarians submit reflections on their years as vowed women religious. Reflections from a number of this year's celebrants are included here with the class photos.

Sr. Charitine Jones - 75 Years

God is good. In my 75 years, I've served guests and international students in Jefferson at St. Coletta of Wisconsin. My service at both seminaries was doing general work. In Wyoming, I was in charge of the nursery. I have been a superior and a coordinator. I've been there and done it. I can't count all God's blessings, and I'd do it again. Blessed so much more in my service to archbishops, bishops and students which has enriched my life, and I can thank God for His wondrous blessing. When I leave my room daily, I ask the Lord to walk with me and the Infant Jesus to bless and protect us. Each day I ask for blessings on us, my family, and thank God for all.

Sr. Clarinda Zech - 75 Years

My 75 years were happy years. I greatly appreciated the opportunity of preparing the children and adults for receiving the sacraments, and for helping the students so that they could be successfully employed. In retirement, I have more time for prayer and meditation, and in striving to follow the ways of St. Francis.

Sr. Helen Svancarek - 70 Years

As I celebrate my Jubilee, I am filled with gratitude for God's special call to be His follower and servant. His presence and fidelity have been evident through the ups and downs of my life, even when I was unaware that He was near. Through the years, I have been proud to be a Sister of St. Francis of Assisi because the qualities and charism of St. Francis permeate my Franciscan family. With God's special



75-Year - (L - R) Sisters Pat Weninger, Clarinda Zech & Charitine Jones

gift to me, I pray that my music brought and continues to bring a little more joy into people's lives.



70-Year -

(BACK L - R)

Sisters Helen

Svancarek & Verna Kayser (FRONT L - R) Sisters Rose Marie Kruse & M. Camille Kliebhan

Sr. Regine Ehm - 60 Years

In my younger years, I thought that our elder generation had it "all together." On an occasion, meeting a Jubilarian, I asked how things were going at that age. She responded, "I'm only beginning." I understand what she was saying – our amazing God is constantly calling and pursuing us – no matter our age, growth, lack of growth – challenging us into deeper relationships, into the mysteries of life and LIFE – and we need an eternity to do this. Thank you, God, for the past, the PRESENT and the FUTURE!

Sr. Carol Mechtenberg - 60 Years

My heart is filled with gratitude to God and to my religious community as I celebrate 60 years as a professed Franciscan sister. The faith, hope, joy and prayer of people I have ministered to will continue to be a great source of inspiration and motivation for me. "Thus says the Lord: I have called you by name: You are mine...You are precious in my eyes." ~ Isaiah 43:1,4

Sr. Mildred Rothwell - 60 Years

I'm a twig on the VINE! The life of Jesus is mine and shared with all the rest! It has been astonishing to realize that God can and does use us twigs to accomplish the Holy Will. All it takes is willingness; God does the hard part. I like best being among God's everyday people as one of them, as their sister. My religious life has deepened awareness of the world as God's children, my siblings. Prayer life and action both express my stance. Prayer keeps me open so God can use me. Caring action is sign and token of my desire for God's agenda and other's good. With this is the steadying strength of religious community. Together we discern the Spirit's direction. Together we companion each other on the journey.

Years as Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi

Sr. Margaret Ruddy - 60 Years

Living 60 years as a vowed religious has been the greatest gift of my life. God has been so generous in His gifts. I thank and bless Him every day of my life.

Sr. Valerie Sepenski - 60 Years

Blessings upon blessings!! All these years, I have been gifted by women with whom I have shared community. God's gifts were given and shared generously. These women have shared their deepening search for God; their enthusiasm for knowledge; their gifts of music and art; their gifts of mind and heart. Thanks be to God for all these gifts of life and for all the women that God has placed in my life during these 60 years.

Sr. Anne Stremblau - 60 Years

The world, our country, and religious life have changed considerably in these 60 years, but God is still our loving Father.

Sr. Clara Styger - 60 Years

I am continually amazed at the AWESOME LOVE AND MERCY OF GOD. Humbled to be called to serve as a sister in this community.

Sr. Bea Wagner - 60 Years

When I entered religious life after graduating from Cardinal Stritch, the hardest thing for me to give up was travel. My brother, Mike, and I had just returned from a bike trip through the Canadian Rockies. But the Divine is not to be outdone in generosity. With a change in ministry from St. Mary's Academy to "missionary status," teaching English at a high school in Alexandria, Egypt, and later as a faculty member at Nanzan University in Nagoya, Japan, I was rewarded with travel and sights as faculty guide on a trip to Russia and the countries of eastern Africa, as well as a visit to the Pacific Island where my brother, Francis, was killed in WWII.

Sr. Jeanne Carrigan - 50 Years

It has been a wonderful life. I love being a Franciscan of the Lake Michigan variety. The ministries I have engaged in have used my talents and abilities to the fullest. Opportunities to develop my spiritual life have been offered to me at just the right times. I am very grateful to each member of my community for helping me be a whole person. I look forward to the next years for even a fuller understanding of my calling.



60-Year - (BACK, L - R) Sisters Bernice Mertens, Anne Stremblau, Valerie Sepenski, Marie Rose Petrie, Bea Wagner & Regine Ehm (FRONT, L - R) Sisters Clara Styger, Carol Mechtenberg, Mildred Rothwell, Rose-marie Klotz & Margaret Ruddy

Sr. Ladonna Woerdeman - 50 Years

During these 50 years as a Sister of St. Francis of Assisi, I have had the opportunity and privilege to walk with people of all ages and faith traditions; of a diverse population and ethnicity, occupation, job, and economic status; and to advocate for the various health and nutrition needs of those who are less fortunate. I thank God for the blessings I have received over the years.



50-Year - (BACK) Sister Ladonna Woerdeman (FRONT) Sister Jeanne Carrigan



25-Year - (AT LEFT) Sister Wanda Sheber

Conference Focus: Intercultural Competency

The Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi sponsor nine Corporate Ministries. These range from social service outreach to higher education. In 1904, we began at St. Coletta of Wisconsin in Jefferson to work with persons with developmental disabilities. In 1993, the last sponsored ministry was formed to provide senior housing in the building that had been the health care center for our sisters.

This year the sisters and Canticle/ Juniper Courts co-hosted the conference at St. Francis Convent. Fr. Bryan Massingale was the speaker for a second year by request of the participants last year. He is a priest from the Archdiocese of Milwaukee who is beginning his second year as a professor at Fordham University in New York City. Fr. Bryan expanded on the theme of *Intercultural Competency* with an emphasis on how the journey continues.

Intercultural competency deals with facing difference, diversity. In doing this, we can often feel uncomfortable because we aren't sure what to



(L to R) Demetrius Robinson, Executive Assistant St. Ann Center for Intergenerational Care; Liz Brzeski, Director of Residential Operations, St. Coletta of Wisconsin; and Ray Bryan, Vice President of Residential Services, St. Coletta's of Illinois. These panelists from OSF corporate ministries shared their experiences of growing in understanding diversity in their own lives and workplaces. And they listened attentively to remarks from the conference participants.



Sean Lansing (left), who heads up Mission Integration at Cardinal Stritch University, Fr. Bryan Massingale, and Sr. Joanne Schatzlein, Director of Corporate Ministries for the congregation, reflect the high energy among the conference participants.

do, what to say or how to behave. This is normal, and the only way to overcome our feelings of inadequacy is to get to know each other. We all have a story and, in the telling of that story, bonds of mutuality are developed. The key is respect, because then we call forth the best from ourselves and from those we encounter.

What do we gain by having a concern for diversity:

1. compliance [in the legal sense],
2. credibility [if our leadership looks like the community and those whom we serve],
3. competence [by drawing from a larger pool of people which creates a larger pool of talent],
4. insight [a broader view of reality which moves our conversations in new directions],
5. integrity [a great congruence between our mission, who we aspire to be, and our leadership – institutions suffer when integrity is compromised]. Integrity is being who we say we are.

Working in small groups, each ministry made plans for implementing greater diversity in the context of their mission. As individuals, each person left the conference feeling more empowered to do what is hers/his to do in order to grow in intercultural competency.

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.

Nojoshing Notes is a publication of the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi.

Please send comments / suggestions to:

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