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Franciscan Pilgrimage



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What are the servants of
God if not his troubadours,
who must move people's
hearts and lift them up
to spiritual joy?

— St. Francis of Assisi

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greet Archbishop Grob

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Spiritual Graces Await Franciscan Pilgrims

One of the things we like about *Troubadour* is the opportunity it provides for us to explore a topic beyond one article, from different perspectives, with the hope of giving readers new insights.

The topic we've chosen for this issue is Franciscan pilgrimage. Why is that something we wish to explore? Because as Franciscan women religious who profess to follow the teachings and embody the charism of St. Francis of Assisi, the experience of learning more about him and embracing his story is a vital part of who we are. But the pilgrimage experience is not only for those who have a religious vocation. It is also for lay people.

For those who wish to learn more about St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi, a pilgrimage, especially one to Assisi, can be a transformative personal experience. An Assisi pilgrim quite literally walks where St. Francis and St. Clare walked. Pilgrims visit holy sites that were instrumental in their lives. Franciscan values come alive and take on more meaning. Many find a

peace they have never felt anywhere else. Pilgrims learn that being a pilgrim is very different than being a tourist. They discover what "spirituality of place" means.

Many years ago, we began offering the pilgrimage experience to leaders of our corporate ministries to deepen their understanding of our charism and values. These pilgrimages were so successful that we decided to offer them to other lay people within the ministries, and also to Associates and donors.

On page 4, you will read an inspiring story by two staff members of St. Coletta of Wisconsin, the congregation's oldest special needs ministry, who went on the Assisi and Rome pilgrimage earlier this year. They beautifully describe their journey and what those special days in Italy meant to them.

On page 8, you will read about Sister Joanne Schatzlein and her 30-plus years (and counting!) as a pilgrimage leader. She has led over 80 groups to Assisi and Rome.

Through this issue of *Troubadour*, we hope you learn something about



(l to r) Sisters Charlotte Roost, Joanne Schatzlein, and Sylvia Anne Sheldon

the pilgrimage experience that you did not know before. We encourage you to think about making one yourself sometime. If you decide you would like more information, you can contact Franciscan Pilgrimage Programs, based in Franklin, Wis., for a list of their offerings. Our congregation has worked with them very successfully since the 1990s. They can be reached at info@franciscanpilgrimages.com.

Peace to you as we all journey together as faithful pilgrims and followers of St. Francis of Assisi!

Sister Joanne Schatzlein, OSF
Sister Charlotte Roost, OSF
Sister Sylvia Anne Sheldon, OSF

ON THE COVER

Pictured is the courtyard of San Damiano, where St. Clare of Assisi lived and cared for St. Francis in his later years. It includes the Church of San Damiano, where a young St. Francis, kneeling before the crucifix there, heard the words, "Go forth, Francis, and rebuild my crumbling house." St. Clare lived at San Damiano for 42 years and died within its walls. The site was originally a hospice for pilgrims that dates back to the year 1030. It is located just outside Assisi.

Photo by Nancy Ketchman

Vision Statement

As Franciscans, living the Gospel and trusting in God's providence, we strive to practice hospitality as reflected in our care for every person and care for all creation.

– Chapter 2023

Mission

Our Mission as Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi is to further the coming of the reign of God:

- to live the Gospel;
- to be faithful to the rule of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis and the Constitutions of Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi;
- to carry forward the dependence upon the Father, prayerfulness, simplicity, and hospitality which marked the foundation of the Congregation in Milwaukee; and
- to be available in service to the Church, at home and abroad, in those areas of concern and need that call forth the corporate and personal gifts of our members.

– Call and Response
para. 19, 1984

COVER STORY

Pilgrimage to Assisi and Rome

By Associate Katy Simon
and Associate Candidate
Rachel Schaefer

*A Journey
of Faith
and Beauty*

In February of 2025, a group from St. Coletta of Wisconsin joined others from a sister congregation and The Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi's corporate ministries for a pilgrimage to Assisi and Rome. We embarked on a truly unforgettable experience – a journey filled with spiritual discovery, breathtaking beauty, and cherished fellowship. This pilgrimage was more than just a trip; it was a sacred experience that allowed us to walk in the footsteps of saints, deepen our faith, and create memories that will last a lifetime.

Our pilgrimage began in the hilltop town of Assisi, the birthplace of St. Francis and St. Clare, two towering figures of humility, love, and devotion. Standing amidst the medieval streets and stone buildings, it felt like we had gone back in time. We gathered at the Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi, where the spirit of the poor man of Assisi is alive in every stone and painting. We also visited the Basilica of St. Clare, where we reflected on the life of this remarkable woman who gave up everything to follow Christ in service and simplicity.

The experience of our serene and uplifting group prayer in the rooftop garden of Casa Papa Giovanni, where we stayed, was truly remarkable. The panoramic views of the surrounding landscape added to the beauty of the moment, as we found ourselves enveloped in a tranquil atmosphere. This peaceful setting provided the perfect backdrop for reflection and connection, allowing us to immerse ourselves fully in the experience. Each breath we took felt infused with a sense of calm and gratitude, making the prayer not just an act of devotion, but a profound moment of unity with nature and each other.

At Rocca Maggiore, the medieval fortress overlooking Assisi, we were moved not only by the views and the contrast between the grandeur of the fortress and the simplicity of St. Francis' life, but also by the profound experience of spiritual unity. We felt a deep sense of history as we walked the ancient paths. Gathering outside in a circle, we shared prayers for peace from various world religions. This powerful moment of interfaith connection reminded us that we are united in a shared desire to seek the divine despite our different traditions and languages. It was an inspiring moment that deepened our understanding of faith, compassion, and the universal nature of prayer.

At San Damiano, the small church where St. Francis first heard Christ's call to "rebuild my Church," we gathered for a deeply moving anointing ceremony. Surrounded by this sacred place's quiet beauty and history,



(l to r) Rachel Schaefer, Brittney Skanse, Katy Simon, and Cheryl Rowland in Assisi

we offered prayers for healing, renewal, and peace — for ourselves, our loved ones, and our pilgrimage community. As each person was anointed, there was a palpable sense of God's presence and love, reminding us that pilgrimage is not only about the places we visit, but also about the transformation we carry within.

La Verna was one of the most moving stops, the place where St. Francis received the Stigmata. Surrounded by peaceful forests, caves, and dramatic mountain views, we paused silently, reflecting on Francis' profound union with Christ's suffering. Adding to the sacred atmosphere, we encountered a group of friars who sang in Italian, their voices echoing through the stone corridors as they led us in a solemn procession to the chapel. They then guided us back, their chanting continuing like a prayer carried on the wind.

At Rivotorto, we stood in the humble sanctuary where St. Francis began living his radical call to poverty and service, surrounded by the simplicity that defined his early life. The preserved stone hut reminded us of the profound faith and humility that shaped the Franciscan movement. At the Portiuncula—the tiny church within the Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli—we felt the deep peace that repeatedly drew Francis back. Here, we prayed for renewal and grace, remembering the lepers Francis once served with such tender love. Walking where he walked and reflecting on his embrace of those cast aside was humbling and inspiring.

continued

This sculpture of St. Francis overlooks the Umbrian Valley below Assisi.



The Basilica of St. Francis, Assisi



St. Peter's Basilica, Rome

Photos by Marian Doyle

Leaving Assisi behind, we traveled to Greccio, the humble village where Francis created the first live Nativity scene. Standing in the quiet of that holy place, we were reminded of the beauty of simplicity and the power of the Christmas story to touch hearts across centuries. Together we shared a special Christmas dinner before we journeyed to Rome.

Rome is a place where history, art, and faith leave you in awe. We visited the Colosseum, the Trevi Fountain, the Pantheon, standing in amazement at these ancient sites. Walking around the sacred grounds, we reflected on the early Christians who bore witness to their faith with extraordinary courage.

Our time in Rome reached its spiritual height at the Vatican and St. Peter's Basilica. The vast square, the majestic dome, and the grandeur of St. Peter's moved us deeply. One of the most unforgettable moments was

going through the Holy Door at the Basilica during the Jubilee Year, a rare and powerful ritual signifying God's mercy and grace. Stepping through the door, we carried our prayers, hopes, and intentions, united with millions of pilgrims worldwide. It was a moment of grace that touched us in unique ways.

Along the way, we were continually awed by the beauty of Italy — rolling hills dotted with olive trees, sunlit vineyards, narrow cobblestone streets, and sweeping views over valleys and ancient cities. Whether wandering through Assisi at sunset or gazing over the rooftops of Rome, the beauty of God's creation was a constant companion on our journey.

Throughout this pilgrimage, we shared laughter, prayer, tears, and joy. We grew closer not only to God but also to one another, forming bonds that will remain long after we return home. The pilgrimage was a beautiful reminder of what St. Francis and St. Clare taught us: that simplicity, love, and openness to God's grace can transform our lives.

The experience allowed us to step away from the chaos of daily life and immerse ourselves in a reflective experience. May we continue to be pilgrims, seeking God in all things, and may the memory of this holy journey inspire us to live lives of joy, service, and love. ■

Whether wandering through Assisi at sunset or gazing over the rooftops of Rome, the beauty of God's creation was a constant companion on our journey.

The Corporate Ministries Sponsored by The Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi

St. Coletta of Wisconsin, Jefferson, Wis., provides residential, day, pastoral care, and vocational programs for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities and other challenges. Founded 1904.

St. Coletta's of Illinois, Tinley Park, Ill., provides residential, educational, vocational, medical, and pastoral care programs to children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Founded 1949.

St. Ann Center for Intergenerational Care, Milwaukee, Wis., offers intergenerational day care for children and adults at two sites. Founded 1983.

Canticle Court and Juniper Court, St. Francis, Wis., are two separate ministries that provide affordable housing and independent living for older adults. Founded 1987 and 1994.

St. Elizabeth School, Baltimore, Md., is a special needs elementary, middle, and high school serving students with intellectual, emotional, and physical disabilities. Founded 1961.

Cardinal Cushing Centers, Braintree and Hanover, Mass., provide residential, vocational, educational, day programs, and supportive care for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Founded 1947.

Franciscan Shore, St. Francis, Wis., offers assisted living residence for seniors on the grounds of St. Francis Convent along the Lake Michigan shore. Established 2024.



The Transformational Power of Journeying with Saints

By Sister Mary Lea Schneider, OSF

What, exactly, is a pilgrimage? That intriguing question was answered for me on a personal level in 2003 when I embarked on a Franciscan pilgrimage to the Italian sites where St. Francis and St. Clare lived and ministered.

At Cardinal Stritch University, where I served, we had established a pilgrimage program for faculty and staff several years earlier. The program was open to all, Catholic and non-Catholic, who desired to delve more deeply into the Franciscan charism, mission, and values of the Franciscan university where they served our students and one another.

The transformational experiences of our faculty and staff led us to begin student pilgrimages as well. These proved to be the “value-added” formational piece to creating a caring community for all.

Each year, returning Stritch pilgrims spoke of a profound change in their understanding of the spirituality of Francis and Clare and their appreciation of its uniqueness, and their desire to live it more deeply in their own lives. They learned that a pilgrimage is not a trip to an end point, a place, even though it includes a holy place or places. It is a journey, and the journey itself is the religious experience.

Now it was my turn to become a pilgrim.

As I flew to Italy, I recall a sense of entering a liminal phase in which I was no longer who I was in my university role. I was now one on a journey, seeking to experience the spiritual roots of Francis and Clare . . . to walk with them on the same terrain and to listen to what they could teach me in my own spiritual quest.

The journey itself to their places of preaching and living became my teacher. Moving from one holy site to another, with traveling companions to share insights and experiences, I found myself letting go of the ordinary cares and concerns left behind and focusing on the spiritual teachings of each day. The mental cords which once bound me to Milwaukee began to slacken and disappear with my immersion in the life and spirituality of these two saints.

For me, that became the most important part of the

journey—to let go of the normal bustle of life and gradually open myself to the presence of the Divine in myself and others. To be open to the same presence that drew Francis and Clare to their commitment and service to God, to others, and to all of creation.

I was filled with a sense of respectful awe at each place we visited: San Damiano, the Portiuncula chapel, Greccio, and others. The holiness of the sites inspired quiet reflection and gratitude for the gift of those two saints to the church and world. The climb to La Verna, on Mount Penna, for those of us who managed it, was a high point (no pun intended). Being in the place where Francis received the Stigmata, and viewing the same landscape below that moved Francis to prayer, also moved me in gratitude for the beautiful creation we have been given to tend.

I returned to normal life a changed person. Having the opportunity to walk in the footsteps of these two saints and to pray at the very sites where they lived was a great joy. The journey itself became, like the journey to Emmaus, a walking with Jesus, conversing together. And on this journey, Francis and Clare were present, too, to share their gifts of faith, hope, and love with all of us. ■

Sister Mary Lea Schneider taught in the religious studies department at Michigan State University for 20 years. She was president of Cardinal Stritch University in Milwaukee from 1991 to 2008.

Sister Mary Lea (lower left) with Sister Joanne Schatzlein (middle) and another pilgrim during her pilgrimage to Assisi and Rome.





Quaking of the Soul

In over 34 years as a pilgrimage leader, Sister Joanne Schatzlein continues to witness a reawakening of faith and transformation of heart among countless grateful pilgrims.

By Sara Woelfel

In her dream, her car bounced precipitously down Lombard Street, San Francisco's "crookedest street in the world."

Waking up mid-dream, a disoriented Sister Joanne Schatzlein felt her bed shaking. She quickly realized she was experiencing an earthquake and went into the hallway of Casa Papa Giovanni in Assisi, Italy, to connect with the pilgrims staying there. As one of the pilgrimage leaders, she tried to remain calm even as her heart raced.

Perhaps not quite as dramatic as that experience, Sister Joanne can recount many other memorable moments since she joined Franciscan Pilgrimage Programs (FPP) in 1991. While the memory of Assisi's devastating earthquake on Sept. 26, 1997, remains one of her most vivid, she remembers with equal gravity and clarity the moving experiences of pilgrims during rituals, Masses, tours, and times of group reflection as they surrendered to the soul-quaking transformation of the pilgrimage journey.

"These places of antiquity remind us that the challenge of the pilgrimage is to pull back continually the various layers built up over time," Sister Joanne wrote in an article for the respected Franciscan journal, *The Cord*. "My own faith is deepened as I witness ways pilgrimage truly changes people's lives."

The privilege of accompanying pilgrims to sacred Franciscan sites brings her fresh joy even after more than 80 pilgrimages over the past 34 years. Today, she leads one pilgrimage each year while serving as director of The Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi.

Sister Joanne still marvels at God's providence in leading her to the FPP. With a degree in nursing and full-time work in healthcare, she pursued a master's degree in Franciscan Studies in 1984 from St. Bonaventure University and connected with people there who would invite her to join the FPP staff.



Sister Joanne (far right) in Assisi with pilgrims from the congregation's corporate ministries.

"I had the degree and a passion for the stories of St. Francis and St. Clare. Now I had the opportunity not just to talk about my research and what I had read, but I was able to go to the places where these events unfolded."

Beginning in 1999, in addition to leading pilgrimages, Sister Joanne worked full-time as the FPP marketing director. During her seven years in that role, she developed partnerships that created pilgrimage programming customized for high schools, universities, health systems, and ministries. These programs still serve an essential formation role as the Sisters pass on their Franciscan charism to lay leaders and staff.

"This is more important than any workshop or seminar," Sister Joanne said. "On pilgrimage, the employees immerse themselves in the stories of Francis and Clare, imagining the scenes of their lives, and then translating these situations into our own 21st century realities."

After decades of walking beside pilgrims, Sister Joanne approaches each pilgrimage with a sense of humility and openness.

"For all the years I have led pilgrimages, two truths remain. First, I am not the leader. It is the Holy Spirit who inspires everything. The second truth? Leading pilgrimages never gets old. I, along with the pilgrims, always learn something new about these two saints who inspire the living of our Franciscan values. I feel grateful and blessed." ■



Sister Joanne Schatzlein



Associates Answer the Call to Do What is Theirs to Do

By Sister Ann Kelley, OSF

Many have been inspired by an often quoted saying of St. Francis of Assisi, “I have done what is mine to do, may Christ teach you what is yours to do.”

Forty-two years ago, The Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi heeded that admonition when they created Associate Relationship. This lay Franciscan way of life has been embraced by many women and men as committed Associates who live St. Francis’ values of dependence on God, prayerfulness, simplicity, and hospitality. While Associates share in the spirituality of the Sisters and other significant benefits, they live out their commitment in a manner consistent with their personal responsibilities, in their homes and in their places of work. And they contribute abundantly to the greater Franciscan mission.

Some of our Associates were Sisters for a while and have maintained their relationship with the congregation over the years. Others have been employees in our corporate ministries or have been invited by a friend who is an Associate to consider this Franciscan way of life. Most are seeking something deeper in their spirituality in relating to God and God’s people. For some, the longing of their hearts is fulfilled in part by becoming Associates and joining others in Associate Relationship.

Many Associates become members of a faith-sharing group that includes Sisters. They often pray together, study how to live with gospel and Franciscan values, support each other in various life experiences, and celebrate birthdays and other events. Some meet regularly by teleconferencing, while others gather in person. The particulars of the meetings depend much on what is practical for each small group, and how the Holy Spirit leads them. Many also participate with the Sisters in congregational events.

My own local small group, consisting of two Sisters and four Associates, recently made a retreat together. While each one was faithful to her own spiritual journey guided by the Spirit, we gathered for morning and evening prayer, and on most days for centering prayer. Our culinary gifts were on full display and much appreciated during the dinners we shared together. We delighted in attending Mass at small rural churches. Two members of our local group renewed their Associate commitment



(l to r) Associates Kristin Pederson-Carver, Susan Schramek, Sister Joanne Meyer, and Associates Sharon Thyne and Mary Jane Kelley gathered this past summer for a retreat.

during a prayerful ceremony that one of them designed. Yes, Christ taught us what to do while we retreated together. It was truly a holy experience being with other dedicated Franciscans who were so open to the presence of our loving God and so honest with each other.

At another venue – St. Coletta of Wisconsin in Jefferson, Wis., one of our corporate ministries – there are five women who are currently listening to what Christ is calling them to do. Each one of them has made a Franciscan pilgrimage to Assisi and Rome. This experience served as a personal call to become an Associate. They have begun their journey as Associate candidates, and will continue to meet monthly with Carol Wilant, co-director of Associate Relationship, and with me.

As is evident in these wonderful Associates and Associate candidates, the words of St. Francis of Assisi continue to move lives today. How might they inspire you?

“I have done what is mine to do, may Christ teach you what is yours to do.” ■

Sister Ann Kelley is co-director of the Office of Associate Relationship for The Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi. She can be reached at associaterel@lakeosfs.org.

Jubilarians Celebrate Years of Commitment

75
years
(1950)



Sister Felicia Schlechter

Blessings! Blessings! Blessings! Let me count the ways God has been so very generous and gracious to me. Some of the surprises I understood quite quickly. Others have and are still beginning to be understood and wondered at in the eternal time in which we already dwell. I am so grateful to have been afforded such an immeasurable opportunity.



Sister Clare Ahler

I am so grateful to God for calling me to our beloved community, and for all our dear Sisters who walked with me on the journey.

Sister Eileen Wendt

My journey in religious life was full of “surprises” from God. These surprises were experienced in challenges, risks, fears, joys and sorrows. Looking back, I realize I was always where I needed to be, doing God’s work. God has blest me with numerous gifts. The gift I most cherish is perseverance – truly “amazing grace” for me, who “acquired” a religious vocation years after I entered religious life.



Sister Agnes Terese Eckelkamp

My life as a religious has been a spiritual journey. I am grateful to God for my vocation.

70
years
(1955)



Sister Therese Ann Koltes

Living as a vowed Franciscan religious in community has been a growing revelation of God’s love and faithfulness. God is the constant, the rock, in my life.

Sister Mary Jerome Lacy

Great is God’s faithfulness! Great is God’s faithfulness! God has been faithful to me from the moment of my birth and up to my conversion to Catholicism in 1952. My religious vocation is a result of God’s mercy, God’s love, and the compassion of others. For this I am most grateful and give God the glory.



Sister Grace Schauf

As a woman religious who entered the community at age 14, I have no regrets and would do it again. It assisted me to grow up quickly and mature early. The access to community life and prayer has enabled me throughout my whole life to depend upon God, through the tough and the good.

I have been given many opportunities throughout religious life: spiritually, educationally, and vocationally. I have been blessed to have lived with over 250 Sisters on the three missions I have been assigned to. The work with the developmentally challenged for over 70 years has given me great rewards and love for the needy and the poor. I thank The Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi for this wonderful opportunity. I thank my God for the good health I enjoy.



Twelve Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi rejoiced with their Franciscan community, families, and friends on July 25 and 27 as they celebrated Jubilees. Jubilee is a celebration to honor those who have reached milestone anniversary years as members of the congregation of The Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi. The annual celebration includes liturgies and special gatherings to mark the Sisters' years of ministry.

On these pages, the 2025 Jubilarians offer reflections about their lives as women religious. Congratulations to all!

60

years
(1965)

Sister Donna Siegl

Seventy years? Really? Wow! In some ways, being professed for 70 years seems forever, yet at the same time not very long at all! So how do you condense 70 years into a few words? Impossible! I'll begin by saying it's been an adventure! God has placed people in my life who have profoundly impacted and enriched my God-given generous portion of blessings. My life experiences have been a series of ABCs. God, being a God of surprises, changed the order of the letters of my alphabet from "ABCs" to "CABs"! The (C)hallenges are (A)lways followed by (B)lessings. That's been a consistent pattern in life. A series of challenges is always followed by profound richness in blessings. Simply put, that's who God has been and is . . . and I have been very generously blessed! The goal is in sight: "One thing I ask of the Lord, this I seek: to dwell in the house of the Lord, all the days of my life." (Psalm 27:4a)



Sister Lourdet Van Driel

Gratefully, I heard God's call to minister in a religious vocation in junior high years, but being the oldest girl in a family of 13 children, I decided to wait for an appropriate time to embrace that vocation. After high school, I won a scholarship to the University of Northern Colorado and taught business education in high schools in Colorado and Wyoming for four years.

After entering The Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi in 1952, I taught at St. Mary's Academy for 11 years along with formation and other clerical assignments in summers. In 1959, I won a scholarship to obtain a master of arts degree in business education at Catholic University of America in summers. Through the years, I also served at Assumption High School in Wisconsin Rapids, at Cardinal Stritch University, and at St. Francis de Sales Seminary. I enjoyed teaching very much, but I am grateful I had a variety of other ministries also. I have fond memories of the people I've met and the experiences and challenges I've enjoyed in each year of ministry.

Sister Jodene Wydeven

How could life be any better? My God is a faithful God, who is always with me. For over 70 years I have experienced His goodness and love in this congregation and in community. My Sister companions over the years have been an inspiration to me, a source of happy living, and I am very grateful. My ministries in education, administration, and work with the elderly Sisters have been suited to my talents, and I am fulfilled. Thank you, God, for all of it.



Sister Julianne Koch

How do I sum up 60 years of religious life? To be brief, two words come to mind: change and trust. Entering the convent just before the start of Vatican II, and living through those changes even until now, encompasses my 60 years. Trust in the Providence of God and God's faithfulness is the bedrock of growing into the call to be who I am today. I celebrate my Jubilee with a heart full of gratitude for all that has been.



Sister Rose Sevenich

I am grateful for receiving God's call to this way of life. Change became and remains a constant companion. Grace was and continues to be given to me in abundance. I am blessed.



Promoting Our Values in These Challenging Times

By Sister Florence Deacon, OSF

The national Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) issued a public statement in January expressing concern that they were seeing a global shift in values and priorities that is having negative effects on vulnerable individuals and the health of the planet. Discerning how women religious could effectively respond, the statement listed the principles



Sister Florence Deacon

and values which had guided their lives and to which they would hold true. These principles included respect for all life, care for the most vulnerable (including immigrants), comprehensive immigration reform, standing against violence and systemic racism, care for the Earth, respecting each person's journey toward wholeness, and the alleviation of poverty.

The statement recognized that being hopeful and compassionate when powerful forces were working toward contrary purposes would not be easy. Women religious could lend their voices and support to organizations that promote human dignity. It noted bluntly, "Lives all around us are at stake." After cautioning the need to make wise choices that won't contribute to fear, division, and violence, the statement concluded: "May we wholeheartedly embrace the call of the church to be people of hope and live this call with all our being for the sake of the world and its future."

Religious congregations across the U.S. continued their own discernment about how they could effectively respond both individually and together. With wording reminiscent of the LCWR statement, 21 Pennsylvania congregations of women religious placed a full-page advertisement in the *Philadelphia Enquirer* newspaper in April that was titled, "A Vision for a Future Full of Hope." The ad called attention to how Catholic social teaching and the values espoused by women religious have much to offer our nation during this challenging time. It appealed to readers to live by values that promote the common good and bring out the best in people, values that call for respect for the needs of those most vulnerable in our society, and respect for the environment and all of creation.

Other congregations began to amplify the message of "A Vision for a Future Full of Hope." In May, eight congregations of Catholic Sisters of the Upper Mississippi Valley placed the ad in newspapers in Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. They included: Congregation of the Humility of Mary, Davenport, Iowa; Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa, Sinsinawa, Wis.; Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, La Crosse, Wis.; Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Sisters of St. Francis, and the Sisters of the Visitation, all of Dubuque, Iowa; and the Sisters of St. Francis, Clinton, Iowa.

The Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi also discerned how to respond to today's challenges. In June the congregation joined 14 other communities of women religious in Wisconsin's LCWR Region 9 in signing, "A Vision for a Future Full of Hope," and placing it in newspapers in Milwaukee, Green Bay, La Crosse, Marinette, Oshkosh, Fond du Lac, and Appleton. The congregation's Leadership Team explained, "We feel that this time calls for religious leaders in our nation to put forth the values that their congregations were founded upon, and to point out the moral and ethical questions that are being raised when it comes to fair and just treatment of the elderly, immigrants, migrant families, the poor, and other vulnerable populations among us."

This is also a specific way to live out our vision statement, which reads: "As Franciscans, living the Gospel and trusting in God's providence, we strive to practice hospitality as reflected in our care for every person and care for all creation."

As stated in "A Vision for a Future Full of Hope:"

"Today, we ask you to join us in living these values with courage. Love our neighbors! Welcome the stranger! Care for the most vulnerable among us! Speak the truth! Work for justice! Only when 'We the people' lead with compassion and empathy will a future filled with hope for all generations be possible."

To see the full text of the ad, go to the Justice and Peace page on the congregation's website at lakeosfs.org. ■

Sister Florence Deacon is a past president of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious and former director of The Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi. She currently serves as the congregation's coordinator for Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation.

The Unexpected Blessings of a Stray

By Sister Mary Kemen, OSF

Just before Christmas 2024, Laurie, one of our donors, shared with me that her beloved cat, Snow Sugar, had recently died. Having lost pets myself as a child, I remember the pain and emptiness that came with their deaths. I was moved to write to Laurie to express my sympathy for her loss and to assure her of my prayers.

A couple months later, Laurie wrote back expressing how my letter was a Christmas gift of peace and healing comfort for her and shared with me a couple of treasured memories of Snow Sugar.

The song, “Grace Alone,” came to her as she read my letter. This song was significant to her in an experience she had with Snow Sugar in the summer of 2018. Laurie had spent the previous year getting acquainted with Snow Sugar, a stray cat who had appeared on her property. With Laurie’s loving patience, he learned to trust her. She observed that Snow Sugar was very intelligent, free-spirited, and sensitive. She didn’t realize how sensitive he was until he ran away.

A few weeks later, on a 90-degree morning, she tucked a verse from “Grace Alone” into her pocket and set off to post photo flyers throughout her neighborhood. The next day, a farmer called saying he frequently saw her cat hunting rodents in the pasture near his barn.

For the next few mornings, Laurie brought treats to the site and called out to Snow Sugar. He would meow profusely, then run toward the barn.

Then one day she opened her door, and there was Snow Sugar lying on the patio waiting for her! He had been gone for five weeks. He came in, ate a huge helping of food, and then cuddled on her lap. He was happy and content. Laurie was filled with joy and gratitude. Grace alone had brought Snow Sugar home to her.

Another memory Laurie shared touched my heart. It reminded me of the loving cats I had as a child. After spending some time cuddling next to Laurie, Snow Sugar went to the front door meowing to go out. He began to walk through the doorway when he suddenly stopped, turned around, and came back to her. As she bent down, he stood up on his hind legs, took his right paw and gently patted her cheek. It was as if he was saying thank you for a lovely evening.

Laurie ended her letter saying she will always miss Snow Sugar and treasure the remarkable blessings she received having him in her life.

Little did I realize when I wrote my letter to Laurie in December that it would be a gift of healing and peace for her. In return, I was gifted with two inspiring stories of a special friendship, and a reminder of how God’s creatures are gifts in our lives. Our letters to one another were “grace-filled” and touched our hearts deeply. ■



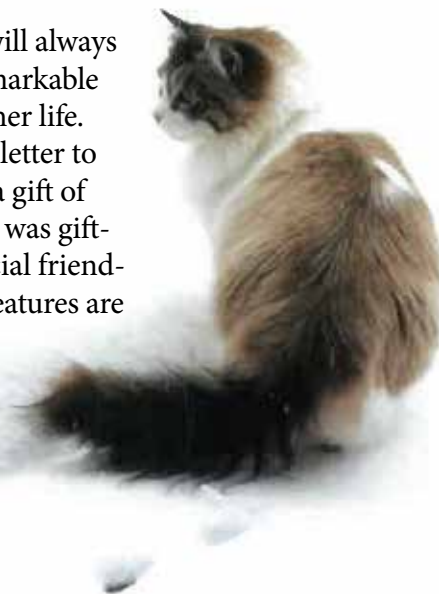
POETS' CORNER

Crossroads on a Footpath

If I would know
just where these paths might go
or to what distant point
I could follow this magnetic mystery,
I would pack my thoughts
within my heart
and pilgrim to the limits of my fantasy,
and I, for sheer delight,
would travel on through courses
deep within the light and shadow
of it all.

But must I know the end
for the journey to begin?
Rather,
what noble roads to find
when one begins in hope
and somewhat blind!

Sister Margaret Halaska, OSF





Archbishop Grob Acknowledges Sisters' Legacy at Closing Liturgy for the 175th Anniversary Year

With heartfelt words of thanks, the archbishop congratulated the Sisters for 175 years of service to the church.

On May 28, Archbishop Jeffrey Grob of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee presided at the closing liturgy of the 175th anniversary year of The Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi. He began the Mass with a nod to history, recalling the many Sisters who, beginning in 1849, built a community of faith and service that endures to this day.

"There's so much history, you can feel it," he said. "You can hear the voices calling out from the cemetery over the hill. We are built on others who have gone before us."

In his homily, the archbishop recalled the courage of the founding women and men who embarked on a new life in the United States in 1849, not knowing what the future had in store for them. He reminded

the Sisters that they must always be remembered.

"We have to bring them with us into this moment. They sanctify us. We need them," he continued.

In a memorable moment during his homily, Archbishop Grob offered a special word of thanks.

"On behalf of the church and my feeble role, I thank you from the bottom of my heart. I thank you and I thank everyone who has gone before. It's the simplest thing in the world to say 'thank you' but we neglect it, and we forget it, and we presume so much."

The Mass was a meaningful conclusion to a year of celebration of the theme, "175 Years of Caring for Others." Highlights included: an April pilgrimage experience in



Sisters Joanne Schatzlein, Charlotte Roost, and Sylvia Anne Sheldon with Archbishop Grob

Milwaukee and Jefferson, Wis., for Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration and Affiliates; a June 23 Mass and luncheon for friends, Associates, corporate ministry leaders, and other congregations; a picnic for Saint Francis de Sales Seminary students in September; and a dinner for current and former staff that was held earlier this year in March.

The Sisters now embark on the next chapter in their history, trusting in God's providence as they continue caring for others and planning for the future and the blessings it will hold. ■

Sister Donates Quilts for Worthy Causes

Sister Marcia Lunz recently created two beautiful quilts to benefit Capuchin Community Services in Milwaukee and St. Elizabeth School in Baltimore.

The quilt created for the Capuchins features the front graphic of 16 t-shirts from years of the annual Capuchin Walk for the Hungry. Sister Marcia presented the quilt to Brother Henryk Cisowski, OFM Cap., on June 13, 2025, while he was on the grounds of St. Francis Convent for the Sisters' participation in their local community walk. It is hoped that the quilt will be used for fundraising purposes to benefit outreach ministries in Milwaukee, which include St. Ben's and the House of Peace.

The second quilt was presented to St. Elizabeth School when Sister Marcia visited the campus in May for a board meeting. She donated it as a contribution

to the school's Project CAMPUS capital campaign to be used for fundraising purposes. The campaign is for an initiative that will create an expanded, revitalized, and safer campus that will include more classroom and recreational spaces. ■

Sister Marcia presented her quilt to Brother Henryk on June 13.



Sister Diana De Bruin Named Vicar for Religious for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee



Sister Diana De Bruin

Milwaukee Archbishop Jeffrey Grob has appointed Sister Diana De Bruin, a Sister of St. Francis of Assisi, as the full-time Vicar for Religious for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. Sister Diana began her new position on September 8, 2025.

Archbishop Grob said, “Sister Diana brings a deep love for the church, a rich spiritual life and years of dedicated service to religious life, and pastoral ministry. Her commitment to fostering communion and collaboration among the diverse communities of religious women and men will be a blessing to all.”

In her new role, Sister Diana will serve as a liaison between the archdiocese and the many religious communities. Her responsibilities will include establishing and deepening her relationship with the leadership of the women’s and men’s congregations and religious working in the archdiocese. She will also create and update a database of religious congregations ministering in the archdiocese, welcome newly arrived communities of Brothers, priests and Sisters to the archdiocese and assist them in becoming familiar with policies and procedures, and organize annual events involving the archbishop and the religious communities.

Sister Diana said, “I strongly believe in the church as an extension of God in the world. When we collaborate in faith and service, we can be an even greater influence for good. Together we can strengthen our shared mission of proclaiming the Gospel and serving the people of God.”

Sister Diana served on the Leadership Team of The Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi from 2007-2023. During that time, she came to know and minister with many of the religious leaders and congregations in the archdiocese. ■

Sister Joanne Schatzlein Appears on ABC’s “20/20” After Selection of New Pope

Sister Joanne Schatzlein, director of The Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi, was in Rome attending an international meeting on the day the new pope was named in May. She was one of over 900 leaders of congregations from around the world who were at the meeting of the International Union of Superiors General (UISG). Knowing the UISG gathering would take place during the time of the Conclave, she imagined she might have a chance to witness the announcement of the new head of the Catholic Church.

What she didn’t anticipate, however, was that an American would be selected, and that she would be interviewed about him by the leading television news anchor in the United States.

“It was truly a surprise. Sister Sue Ernster and I just happened to be in the right place at the right time for that interaction. We could never have predicted we would be approached the way we were, while sitting at a random table at a café, when David Muir appeared with a camera and asked if we would speak with him,” she said.

Sister Joanne and Sister Sue Ernster, director of the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, were featured later that evening in the U.S. on a special report on Pope Leo XIV for the ABC program, “20/20.” Both gave insightful comments about the new American pope in the final minutes of the nationally televised report.

It was an exciting time to be in Rome, and for Sister Joanne, an experience she will never forget! ■



ABC’s David Muir with Sisters Joanne Schatzlein (forefront), Sister Sue Ernster, and a UISG staff member.



Sister Helene Mertes Publishes First Book of Poetry

Sister Helene Mertes has published

“Earth Echoes,” a collection of poems about nature, the environment, and Mother Earth.

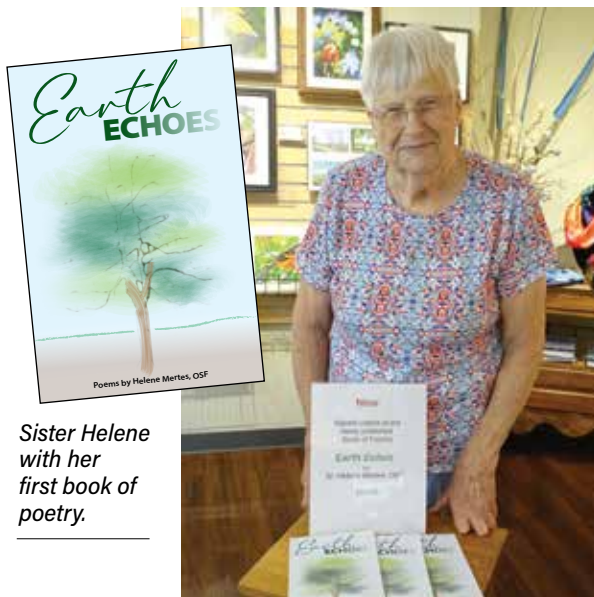
The book is the culmination of over 15 years of writing. Sister Helene began composing poems late in life but took to it eagerly and with much inspiration. “Earth Echoes” is about her great passion for the environment and the Franciscan value of care for all creation.

She pursued the idea of writing a book after her fellow poets in the local South Shore Poets group encouraged her.

“This was quite a venture,” she said. “For many years I thought I’d put my poems in a booklet for the Sisters. But my fellow poets convinced me that I should do a book for the public.”

Sister Helene approached the communications team at the convent and it was determined that preparing the book for print could be done in-house. Lisa Bergman, creative services specialist, laid out the pages and contacted printers. Sisters, staff, and other poets helped with the editing process and, before long, the book was ready to be printed.

“Earth Echoes” is available for purchase in the Cornerstone Gift Shop in St. Francis Convent or by contacting Sister Helene directly at hmertes@lakeosfs.org. ■



Sister Helene with her first book of poetry.



The Rieti Hermitage

A Place of Respite and Prayer

On August 27, 1989, Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi gathered to bless the Rieti Hermitage, a small cottage on the grounds of St. Francis Convent in

St. Francis, Wis. A place of quiet and solitude nestled in a valley between seminary woods and the 1912 grape arbor, the Hermitage was a dream come true for Sister Doris Hachmeister, OSF. She wished to build a quiet retreat space on the grounds for women and men seeking a place apart to be alone with the Holy One. Through the generosity of donors, her dream became a reality.

The Hermitage is named after the Rieti Valley in central Italy. It was in four caves of this valley that St. Francis of Assisi went frequently for periods of solitude and prayer. Today, these sites are visited by pilgrims who desire to walk in the footsteps of St. Francis and pray at these holy places.

Hermitages are very much a part of Franciscan life. St. Francis of Assisi encouraged his brothers to spend time in prayerful solitude to inspire their ministry of service to others and to grow in their relationship with God.

Acting on the desire of St. Francis, the Sisters have provided a place of refuge from the hectic pace of today’s world. Rieti Hermitage invites guests to listen to the deepest yearning of their hearts in the presence of God and in the beauty of creation. Since 1989, the Hermitage has offered a place of healing, rest, and spiritual renewal for many women and men of all ages and faith traditions.

The Sisters’ prayer for those who come to spend time in the Rieti Hermitage is: “In this Rieti, may the Spirit of God gift all who journey here to contemplate life’s events with a spirit of peace, humility, simplicity, and beauty!”

For more information, or to reserve a time to stay at the Hermitage, visit our website at www.lakeosfs.org or contact Sister Mary Kemen at hermitage@lakeosfs.org or 414-744-7423. ■



We pray in remembrance of and thanksgiving for our Sisters who have entered eternal life.



Sister Canise Kolbeck
(March 27, 1930 –
February 25, 2025)

Sister Canise was born in Kohler, Wis., to Joseph and Marie Kolbeck, natives of Austria. She was one of the couple's three daughters.

Sister Canise encountered The Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi in her catechism classes. She graduated from Kohler High School in 1948, and worked at Montgomery Ward and at the Kohler Company as a tabulating clerk prior to entering the congregation in 1951. She professed vows in 1953.

As a second-year novice, Sister Canise taught at St. Sebastian School in Milwaukee and St. Joseph School in Grafton, Wis. She went on to teach for a year in Parkston, S.D. She then transitioned to sacristy work and sewing at the Motherhouse in St. Francis. Beginning in 1961, she worked for five years in the reception office at St. Mary's Academy.

Then, in 1966, she began her 49-year tenure at Cardinal Stritch University. She witnessed the growth of the college as she took on many different roles over a remarkable number of years. Among the positions, she served as assistant to the business officer and facilities coordinator, and as director of grounds and security. Other roles included coordinator of the steno pool, and head of transportation and telephones.

Sister Canise witnessed the advent of the computer age, among many other developments. As she recalled for a collection of stories that the university published in 1998, she was around when the switchboard consisted of a piece of cardboard with two outside trunks and 15 pairs of cords. When she left Stritch, the college had a new telephone system and fiber connecting the entire campus. There were 650 telephone extensions!

Sister Canise was also the key contributor to the production of a photo directory of the Sisters of the congregation, an important archival record and reference tool. In 2000, she was honored at the Italian Community Center in Milwaukee for attaining 175 points for donating blood and platelets. Among her many other talents, Sister Canise had a beautiful singing voice. She was a member of the Bel Canto Chorus and the Allegro and Plymouth Chorales.

She retired in 2015 and was one of the first residents of the new St. Francis Convent, with a ministry of prayer and presence.



Sister Valerie Jarzembowski
(November 14, 1935 – April 29, 2025)

Sister Valerie was born in Queens, N.Y., and raised in a prayerful home with three sisters and two brothers. She knew by the age of eight that she wanted to become a Sister.

Sister Valerie was drawn to the Franciscan Sisters of Baltimore. Her first encounter with them was in Harlem when she visited Resurrection School. After graduating from high school, Sister Valerie entered the community in 1955. Her dedication was "Of the Holy Will of God," and her motto was "God Alone."

Sister Valerie began her teaching ministry after earning a bachelor's degree in education from Notre Dame College in Baltimore, and a master's degree in education (special education) and a master's in administration/supervision from Loyola College, Baltimore.

Beginning in 1957, Sister Valerie taught in grade schools for 15 years in New York, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. In 1972, she began her special education ministry at St. Elizabeth School in Baltimore. From 1974 to 1976, she served as an administrator at the Baltimore Association for Retarded Children. From 1976 to 1989, and from 1992 to 1993, she taught special education and served as administrator at St. Francis School in Baltimore. Beginning in 1989, she worked for three years with Catholic Charities in Baltimore where she helped to start a program with Sister Mildred Rothwell, OSF, that cared for babies with AIDS.

She had several different assignments after that, including school principal, special education teacher, Motherhouse coordinator, and working at Cardinal Cushing Centers in Hanover, Mass. She remained in the Baltimore area after the Franciscan Sisters of Baltimore merged with The Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi in 2001. From 2002 to 2012, she served at St. Elizabeth School as a teacher and financial assistant.

Sister Valerie retired in 2012 to Clare Court in Baltimore, and moved to Clare Hall in St. Francis, Wis., in 2016. She transferred to the newly constructed St. Francis Convent in 2019, where she died peacefully.



Sister Kathleen Jansen
(January 11, 1941 – June 11, 2025)

Sister Kathleen was born in St. Paul, Minn., to Albert and Mildred Jansen, the oldest of five children. Sister Kathleen came to know our Sisters at St. John's parish in Little Canada, Minn. Sister Natalie Aldrich encouraged her

to become an aspirant after 8th grade, but her mother asked her to wait until after high school. As it turned out, she became an aspirant during high school and completed her education at St. Mary's Academy. She professed her first vows in 1961 as Sister Albert Mary. She resumed her baptismal name after the Second Vatican Council.

Sister Kathleen began her teaching ministry at St. Agnes and St. Gerard parishes in Milwaukee, where she served for five years. She earned a bachelor's degree from Cardinal Stritch University in 1969 and after that, she taught for four years at St. Andrew School in Delavan, Wis.

In 1973, she transitioned to special education at St. Coletta of Wisconsin. While teaching there, she also continued her studies, completing a master's degree in special education in 1975. She remained at St. Coletta for 30 years. Over that time, she served as a teacher, director of adult programs, residential supervisor, and at one time served as vehicle fleet manager.

She moved to Milwaukee in 2003. After a sabbatical year, she worked for Catholic Charities until her retirement in 2011. In 2019, she moved to the new St. Francis Convent. ■

SHARING OUR BLESSINGS CAMPAIGN UPDATE

Progress Toward Our \$25 Million Goal: \$16.2 Million (64.8%)

From the very beginning, The Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi have embodied a legacy of service, sacrifice, and transformation, answering God's call wherever the need was greatest.

Guided by the Franciscan values of human dignity, outreach to the poor, peace and reconciliation, and care for creation, our Sisters have joyfully served generations in schools, healthcare, parishes, community support services, and missions around the world.

Today, that same spirit flourishes at St. Francis Convent in St. Francis, Wis., where compassionate caregivers live out these values each day, providing assisted living and memory care support for the Sisters who have cared for so many others.

Through the Sharing Our Blessings campaign, you—our friends, families, and benefactors—have joined us in this sacred ministry. Your prayers, partnership, and generosity make it possible for our Sisters to receive the care, comfort, and dignity they so deeply deserve.

Because of your support, our Sisters:

- **Receive** exceptional care from skilled, compassionate staff, including access to a state-of-the-art neuro-

sensory room for those with cognitive challenges

- **Live** in a safe, spiritual home at the new St. Francis Convent

- **Stay** connected with loved ones through technology that enriches daily life

- **Preserve** their sacred heritage through the restoration of statuary, stained glass, and the outdoor Stations of the Cross

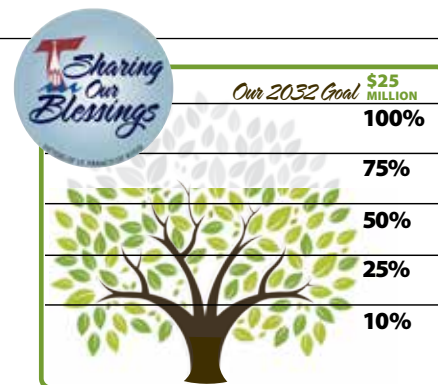
- **Continue** their mission of prayer and peace, celebrating the Eucharist and engaging in justice and peace efforts

- **Delight** in creation through accessible outdoor spaces that foster reflection, community, and wellness.

As we move forward, we continue to strengthen our facilities and programs with best practices in senior and memory care—always striving to support every Sister's physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual wellbeing.

Every gift is a blessing. Together, we ensure that those who have dedicated their lives in service to others now receive the loving care they so richly deserve.

Thank you for sharing your blessings with us. To learn more, visit lakeosfs.org/ blessings. ■



Ways to Share Your Blessings

Your generosity sustains the care, comfort, and Franciscan spirit of the Sisters who have devoted their lives to providing and advocating for others most in need.

To make a gift today, please choose one of the following options:

- **Return the envelope enclosed in this magazine**
- **Call 414-744-1160 to make a credit card gift**



- **Visit lakeosfs.org to donate to give online**
- **Scan the QR code**

For questions and to explore sponsorship opportunities—including support for programs like the Franciscan pilgrimage or events such as our Holiday Boutique—please contact Nicole Duncan, Director of Advancement, at 414-294-7329 or nduncan@lakeosfs.org.

Thank you for your continued support and prayers. ■

GIVING IN ACTION

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the parishioners of St. Anthony of Padua in Kenosha, Wis., for raising funds in support of our Sisters.

Sister Mary Kemen and Sister Kathryn Dean Strandell spoke at the weekend Masses on May 31 and June 1, 2025, sharing our mission and the needs of our community. The response was truly humbling — a total of \$4,468 was donated to help support the health and retirement needs of our Sisters. We are deeply grateful to Mary Andrews and the Human Concerns Committee for supporting our Sisters in such a thoughtful way!

If your parish or organization would like to raise funds to support our Sisters, please contact Nicole Duncan at nduncan@lakeosfs.org or 414-294-7329. ■



Sister Mary Kemen (far left) with Mary Andrews and members of St. Anthony of Padua parish.



DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Brian Kiedrowski: A Lifelong Connection Rooted in Care

By Nicole Duncan

When you meet longtime supporter Brian Kiedrowski, it becomes clear that his generosity to The Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi is more than philanthropy—it's a deeply personal expression of gratitude, faith, and a shared mission.

Brian's connection to the Sisters began in his mother's hometown of Grafton, Wis., where she was a classmate of Sister Margaret Klotz and Sister Rose-marie Klotz. That early family tie planted seeds of respect for the Sisters' spirit of service and devotion to others.

Since 1998, Brian has faithfully supported the Sisters as a member of our St. Clare Society, where members are included for making a monthly recurring gift, making him one of our most enduring partners in mission. His dedication is inspired by a shared passion for geriatric care, a specialty he studied as a medical student and a ministry close to the Sisters' hearts as they continue to care for aging Sisters in the convent. Brian currently serves as chief medical officer at Catholic Health Services in South Florida.

"The care and dignity shown to those in their elder years has always been important to me," Brian shared. "The Sisters embody that compassion in a way that inspires me to do my part."

Recently, Brian experienced another dimension of the Sisters' hospitality by staying at the Rieti Hermitage, a sacred space of stillness modeled after St. Francis' retreat in Italy (see page 16 for more information on this retreat cottage on the grounds of St. Francis Convent). Before attending a family reunion, he chose to spend time in quiet reflection there. "It was a gift," he recalled. "The Hermitage provided a peace and grounding I will carry with me."

For Brian, his monthly support is a way of honoring both the Sisters' past influence on healthcare and education, and their present-day commitment to caring for others.

His generosity for nearly three decades has helped sustain the Sisters' ministries, ensuring that their Franciscan mission continues to bless future generations.

The Sisters are deeply grateful for Brian's faithful friendship and the way he mirrors their own mission: caring for others with compassion, honoring human dignity, and living the Gospel through acts of love. ■

"The Sisters' compassion and the peace I found at the Rieti Hermitage remind me why I give. Their mission has touched my life and continues to inspire me.

— Brian Kiedrowski,
monthly supporter since 1998



(l to r) Brian with Sisters Mary Kemen and Margaret Klotz

BEQUESTS WITH GRATITUDE

Leaving a Legacy of Love and Care

A bequest is one of the most meaningful ways to express your appreciation for The Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi. Your legacy becomes part of our enduring mission—to care for one another and for all of God's creation.

Between April 1, 2025, and October 1, 2025, we were blessed to receive bequests from the following generous donors:

Anonymous
Sheila W. Creasy
Barbara E. Goss
Rhejeanne B. Neeley
Ruth Rabalais
Carole A. Reich
Cecilia M. Thomas
George S. Trovato
Joan B. Young
Dale C. Whittemore

We hold each of them in prayer for remembering our Sisters in such a lasting way.

As you think about your own legacy, we invite you to prayerfully consider making a planned gift by including The Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi in your will or estate plan. You will create a lasting impact that sustains our mission for generations to come. We would be honored to help you explore ways to make your legacy part of ours. ■

Visit
lakeosfsgiving.org
 for more information.

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GIVING TUESDAY, DEC. 2, 2025

Giving Tuesday is a
global movement
dedicated to giving back.



lakeosfs.org/givingtuesday

For more than 175 years, The Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi have dedicated their lives to serving others with care and compassion. Now they need YOUR help.

Many of our Sisters live in homes where outdated bathrooms and steep staircases put them at risk of falls. With your support this Giving Tuesday, we can install accessible walk-in showers, grab bars, stairlifts, and other necessary home modifications that will protect the Sisters' independence and keep them safe in their homes longer.

Join the movement with a gift on or before Tuesday, December 2, 2025. You may use the enclosed envelope or give online by scanning the QR code or visiting lakeosfs.org/givingtuesday.



SCAN NOW TO HELP US
REACH OUR \$25,000 GOAL!

HELP
OUR SISTERS
"LIVE IN PLACE"
SAFELY

