Go forth in peace, for you have followed the good road. Go forth without fear, for He who created you has made you holy, has always protected you, and loves you as a mother. Blessed be you, my God, for having created me. –Saint Clare
Dear Friends and Family of the Franciscan Sisters,

Franciscans are generally known to be happy people. Legend is that Saint Francis would pick up two sticks and play on them as on a violin making music for the Lord Jesus Christ and for all of creation. That is one way that we are makers of peace! We make music in celebration and that helps us grow in making loving and peacemaking relationships happen! Here in Little Falls, Minn., we Franciscans love to celebrate, and celebrate we do every chance we get!

This summer we have wonderful reasons to celebrate. Traditionally we celebrate our reception into community on July 31, the feast of our foundress, Mother Ignatius Hayes. We celebrate the anniversary of our vows on August 11, the Feast of Saint Clare. This summer we celebrate 21 Franciscan Sisters on their 50, 60 and 75 years of walking in the footsteps of Saints Francis and Clare. When I added up the years of ministry of each of these Franciscan Sisters, I found that it comes to 1,285 years. WOW! That is something to truly celebrate.

Another special celebration will take place on August 11. Our candidate, Aurora Catalina Tovar Rodriguez, will be received into the Novitiate on the Feast of Saint Clare. We are happy to welcome her to our Franciscan family.

I remember my reception day, July 31, 1961. On that day my father said that he was so happy because now, instead of having only five daughters, he had several hundred daughters! All during his life he was proud to be the “Daddy” of so many Franciscans, and I am proud to say, many of my Franciscan Sisters knew my father, loved and respected him.

The Franciscan family is a large one. It is made up of many Franciscans of the First, Second and Third Orders, as well as all of those who know and love us and each other. Being Franciscan is about being in loving relationship with one another. We truly are Sister and Brother to each other.

Thank you in a special way to those who share so generously your lives with us. Our world truly needs peacemaking and loving relationships. Thank you for walking with us. Thank you, for you make our world a more beautiful and wonderful place to be and to live.

With love and gratitude,

Sister Mary Cassilda Obowa
Community Minister
It was Clare…

Sister Jean Schwieters

SPIRIT! Just the sound of the word ignites feelings which burst forth from deep inside, filling empty spaces with energy and life. That’s the nature of spirit. It identifies communities and individuals while reaching far beyond any attempt to confine its influence. And it’s the HOLY SPIRIT, the reservoir of all spirit, who beckons and leads; who convinces and changes; who enlivens and creates anew. So it was in the life of Francis of Assisi. In his restlessness and confusion he was led by the Spirit to places of encounter. In his moments of despair he was brought face to face with what he feared most. In his search for answers he discovered a hidden treasure and transparency for his inner vision in the person of Clare.

It was Clare he sought out when he had reached an impasse in the early days of his conversion. In her he discovered a companion who understood both the agonizing uncertainty and the unrehearsed possibilities for a new way of commitment. It was Clare who embodied the vision he struggled to surface from a place deep within his soul. She had begun to bring reality to his vision even before he met her.

As the eldest daughter of a wealthy nobleman she stood to inherit a sizeable fortune. Instead she chose to give her abundance to the poor outside her door and begin her journey into a life without possessions. While Francis felt compelled to preach a Gospel of the poor Christ, he found in Clare a living version of that Sacred Word. From her earliest years Clare had been nurtured in a life of prayer. Within the Offreducio household a semi-cloistered atmosphere existed where Hortulana, Clare’s mother, along with household servants and Clare’s sisters would come together regularly for times of prayer. It was in this homespun spiritual environment that Clare heard the call of God. It was in this cherished circle that she learned the beauty of the common life where position did not dictate power and the role of loving service was practiced by all.

On Palm Sunday evening in 1212 Clare took her first step into an unplanned and open-ended future when she abandoned the security of her home. She had no road maps or guidelines, only faith and conviction that this new adventure was inspired by God. She had simply found in her sharing with Francis a heart map for what she long desired. Her goal was not another monastic existence with privileged promises and security. Her desire was for the privilege of poverty and absolute dependence on God. It would be within a common endeavor that she would give meaning to the power of a shared life, one in which the term “sister” would have special meaning and relationships would supersede accomplishments. Without Clare, Francis would not have realized the possibility of his dream. For it was Clare, more than any other, who held the deep story of the emerging Franciscan movement and it was Clare who filled its pages with reality and hope.

Sister Jean Schwieters serves as liturgist for her Franciscan community and lives in Little Falls. She has a deep love and reverence for Saint Clare and her role in the Franciscan movement.
Saint Francis saw everyone and everything as brother and sister

*Sister Joanne Heim*

As Franciscans we recognize everyone—and everything—as our brother and sister. Throughout my ministries in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa and North Dakota, I’ve met beautiful people whom I’ve come to know as my brothers and sisters in Christ.

At St. Paul’s Church in St. Cloud, I serve as pastoral associate, ministering to the homebound, hospitalized and those in crisis. I hold Visitation Prayer Services at funeral homes and preside at the Word and Holy Communion Services when a priest is not available. I oversee the BeFriender Program, Parish Nurses, Parish Visitors, Wholistic Care Committee, Homebound Communion Ministers and the Prayer Line. I also serve as chaplain at the St. Cloud Hospital on a part-time basis.

What I enjoy most about these ministries is interacting with people and the one-on-one relationships. As I listen to the stories, I discover the depth of their faith. I am moved by the openness of the people and how freely they express gratitude for a pastoral visit and prayer.

One vivid memory is of a young son and daughter who saw their mother through cancer surgery. I was called to the hospital’s surgical holding room to pray with them. The son said to me, with hopes that she would live, “She’s a great mom, has raised us children alone, hers was the first smile I ever saw.” After surgery the son said, “Sister, your prayer was answered. The doctors feel confident that all the cancer was removed.”

St. Paul’s Church is a fun, dynamic community filled with love and faith. We have planned, prayed, suffered and celebrated together. We experience God with us, especially during our Healing Services for the ill. Love and prayer is tangible then.

A miracle story features Yvonne Warzecha who was hospitalized for nearly a year. She had brain surgery for a benign tumor, followed by severe complications. St. Paul’s has a tradition of giving prayer blankets to the seriously ill as a symbol of the church’s promise of prayers. We ministered to her and her to us through her fight for life and her living faith. One nurse said, “I sure do enjoy taking care of Yvonne,” a remarkable statement because she required much nursing care and attention. Yvonne maintained her sense of humor and gratitude and remains an inspiration to me.

On Good Friday, 90-year-old Florence Smiglewski was sitting in the front pew. As she arose to express reverence for the cross on which Jesus suffered and died, she hit the kneeler bench with her leg, proceeded to kiss the cross and returned to her pew. I was in the pew behind her and I noticed pools of blood stretching the length of the pew. (It made the suffering and Christ’s blood more vividly imaginable. Our parish nurse even thought it might be the liturgist’s plan of props.) Quickly, medical staff and caring church members went into action. Florence was taken by ambulance and, after services, the parish nurse and I waited with her in the emergency room for three hours, the amount of time Jesus hung on the cross. Through it all, Florence was loving, grateful and non-complaining. She reminded me of Jesus being “meek as a lamb,” only wincing when she received an injection of Novocain in her open and deep wound. “Nobody will believe this,” she said. We believe because we witnessed it.
In the midst of it all Jesus is present
Sister Juanita Mauer

None of us was with Jesus during his passion and death. We could not tend His wounds and ease His suffering on the cross, but we can do that now by caring for our brothers and sisters in their suffering, sickness and death.

For the past 10 years I have been a hospice nurse, caring for the dying and their families in northern New Mexico. Some are very poor and live in shacks and don’t even have a second set of sheets to change the bed; others are wealthy and live on the mountain tops on the outskirts of Santa Fe. They are Hispanic, Mexican, Native American and Caucasian. They are young and old, children and babies—all on a journey to their final home with God.

Hospice nursing has two goals: to keep the patient comfortable—physically, emotionally, spiritually—and to help the patient and family through the dying process. This ministry is both challenging and rewarding. We sang Christmas carols last year to our patients, one of whom was 94 and asleep when we arrived. As we sang she awakened and said, “Isn’t it fun to be alive!”

I’ve always been fascinated by a person’s last words. One man, as he was dying, sat straight up in bed with his arms outstretched and said, “Come on. Let’s go.” He fell back on his bed and died. Clearly, someone came for him. Another woman responded with, “Oh, Lord, I am not worthy,” and died.

Hospice is a mutual ministry. As I was praying the blessing of Saint Francis for an elderly woman, she reached up and signed me with the cross. I was deeply touched. The dying have taught me what really matters in life, how to live each day fully, how to suffer patiently, how to wait on God and how to surrender.

What you did or did not do for one of these least ones you did or did not do for me. Matthew 25:31-46

I had an elderly Native American woman as a hospice patient. She had Cerebral Bulbar Palsy. I was trying to be a good hospice nurse and anticipate her needs so that she would not suffer, even momentarily. Because of the usual disease process I knew she may have difficulty breathing at some point. I wanted to have oxygen in the home in case she would become short of breath, especially at night when it would be more difficult to get oxygen out to the remote pueblo. I spoke with her son about my idea of getting oxygen in the home in case she would need it. He replied, “Oh no, don’t do that. It would be rushing her spirit to a place where she is not yet.” Needless to say, I did not get the oxygen and she never did need it!

Sister Juanita Mauer finds value in time spent with people she meets at the soup kitchen.

continued on page 6
In the midst of it all, continued

continued from page 5

Embrace those whom we as society and church marginalize. FSLF Commitment Statement, 2005

Others of my sisters and brothers gather at St. John the Baptist’s soup kitchen where 250-300 come for a hot meal each noon. I originally volunteered to serve food; however, after two days, the manager asked me to spend my time sitting with and listening to people—young and old, multi-cultural, college graduates, veterans, some are mentally ill, alcoholics or drug addicts. All are hungry and all are welcome at the table.

At first I was utterly exhausted, overwhelmed and in tears. People want to tell their stories. One man told me, “My sister was murdered in California at Christmas time…and then I fell into a whisky bottle and I can’t get out.” Several young women have said they’re in the process of getting off drugs and how difficult it is not only to get off but to stay off. Fortunately, we have resources nearby to help where people gather and support one another.

The sense of community is strong. People call one another Brother and Sister and, in spite of their challenges, they have good cheer and a sense of humor. Recently some musicians played during the meal; the atmosphere lightened and one man danced with his folding chair.

At the end of the meal and close of conversation, people will shyly say, “Sister, if you have any extra prayers, say one for me.” And I do. As part of my morning prayer, I list the names of those I’ve met and ask God to bless them with all they need. I cannot do much but listen, care and pray. In the midst of it all, I know Jesus is present.
A new place to live

Sister Colette Toenies

Mexico is a country of young people. No matter where we go, there are always many children and young people around us. Throughout Mexico’s rural areas, there is a lack of educated, trained adults who are prepared to teach and nurture the next generation. Getting an education beyond primary school is especially difficult for young people who live in the rural areas where schools beyond the sixth grade are scarce and secondary schools are nonexistent. San Rafael is fortunate in that it has a high school where young people can further their studies and prepare for college. However, extreme poverty and lack of transportation create barriers for many of the youth from the remote areas of our parish to attend high school.

Two years ago, we sisters invited four promising young women from the outlying areas to live with us and attend high school in San Rafael. This was the beginning of a change of lifestyle for them (and for us!). We live together as a family, sharing prayer and responsibilities around the house. Their work is to go to school and study. Ours is to continue our full-time ministries in the parish. In spite of all the activity, everything gets done with everyone doing their part.

With four additional people in the house, we soon began to feel crowded in our small convent. Through our ministry, we also realized the critical need to educate Mexican women. If this project was to succeed and grow, more space was needed. We were delighted when, in February 2007, Sisters Mary Obowa and Michelle L’Allier visited us and recommended that we build a larger place where we could house up to twelve students, the sisters serving in the mission and the young women who are interested in becoming Franciscans.

Indeed, acquiring the land and permissions to build in Mexico was a learning experience. Guided by many generous people, we viewed 31 pieces of land before purchasing the perfect four-acre site within the town of San Rafael.

With Sister Pat Forster as the project manager, we hired Innocencio Cuellar, a construction expert from Saltillo who has “built every kind of building imaginable and thousands of houses,” to oversee the details of construction. We were thankful that he hired many men from our area who were unemployed due to the winter drought. They have proved to be very hard and dedicated workers and are proud to be part of what they see as a better future for their children. With the help of a professional architect, plumbers, electricians and much advice and the vigilance of our new neighbors, the construction has progressed rapidly and is expected to be completed by mid-July.

Our new house will be a hacienda-style building with an inner courtyard and covered walkway to provide privacy. There will a place for meditation, a garden and a chapel. The building will accommodate twelve students, the sisters and candidates.

We thank God daily for the many blessings we have received during these months. We thank St. Joseph for the protection and well-being of our workers and also the bishop for his interest and concern in sending us trusted experts from the diocese to assist in overseeing the progress at critical times. And we thank all of you, our friends and donors, without whom none of this would be possible.

GoodSearch is a Yahoo-powered search engine which allows nonprofit organizations to benefit from each search performed. Just enter “Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls Minnesota” as your charity of choice and a small sum—about a penny per search—will be donated to the Franciscan Sisters. Spread the word!
Border ministry makes deep impression

Sister Clara Stang

They will neither hunger nor thirst, nor will the desert heat or the sun beat upon them. He who has compassion on them will guide them and lead them beside springs of water. Isaiah 49:10

Four St. Cloud State University students spent their spring break accompanying Sisters Betty Berger and Clara Stang on a week’s immersion with Humane Borders in Tucson, Ariz. Humane Borders, a faith-based community organization, provides humanitarian assistance to migrants in the Arizona desert and works for more humane, comprehensive and just immigration policy. Between 1999 and 2004, 650 migrants died attempting to cross the desert. Most deaths are due to dehydration. So that people do not die of thirst, Humane Borders maintains 87 water stations in the Arizona desert.

Jointly, the bishops from the United States and Mexico call for Immigration Reform. Visiting Humane Borders allowed the women a deeper understanding of the Catholic Social Teaching as it relates to migration. As Franciscan Sisters, our corporate stance, “Statement on Immigration – Bringing Healing, Peace and Hope,” calls for a change in our immigration system and practices which will lead to more humane and just treatment of individuals and families.

“We are not murderers; we are not rapists; we are not drug lords or arms dealers. We only come to work because we have no work at home. We would prefer to return to our home and the familiarity that it provides, but we must first provide for our families,” —part of a conversation one of the participants shared with two migrants.

This trip was coordinated through the Newman Center in St. Cloud and the Franciscan Welcoming House and partially funded by a One-World Mission Grant.

When you make a gift: Please feel free to express any wishes you may have for your gift. However, please be advised that in order to ensure that donors will be entitled to a federal income tax deduction, the Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls, Minnesota, is required by Internal Revenue Service rulings to retain full authority over the assets granted to it and cannot accept gifts that are required by the donor to be paid, or to be used, only to further the work of a specific individual or that are required to be used in another country by FSLF or another foreign charity or religious institute.
A Missionary of the Heart

Father Tony Kroll’s association with our sisters serving in Mexico

Father Tony Kroll, a “retired” priest of the St. Cloud Diocese and seasoned missionary, lives out his association with the Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls by assisting them in their missionary endeavors in Mexico.

His work in San Rafael, Nuevo Leon, demonstrates three important values. First, he aims to support seminarians and is excited when others do so as well. In April, here in our very own parish “El Cinco,” Father Jesus Moreno celebrated his first Mass!

Father Tony’s second value is to support missionaries. Mexico is exceptional in that the Catholic schools prepare students to do missionary work in rural poverty areas. Father Tony organized a celebration here in the parish of San Rafael with food, signs and blessing for the 200 young missionaries who set off for 27 villages on the plains.

The third value that permeates Father Tony’s pastoral ministry in San Rafael is to support the meeting of over 265 participants at the fifth Latin American Bishops’ Conference (CELAM V, Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano), which will gather in Aparecida, Brazil. Father Tony and Sisters Janice Wiechman and Pat Forster offered a course on the content of the Aparecida document, which explains the focus of the Latin American and Caribbean Bishops. This conference includes values from past CELAM documents. It further explores exploitation through the global economy, a new ecology of care for the earth, preferential option for and formation of the poor, and participation of the whole family in celebrating the domestic/parish church.

In addition to his work in Mexico, Father Tony continues to be a missionary in the Philippines, in Venezuela, and in Minnesota. We are grateful for his association with the Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls and for his Franciscan charism.

Father Tony Kroll speaking before a group of 200 missionaries.
Jubilarians celebrate 50, 60, 75 years

This issue of Our Journey honors 21 Franciscan Sisters celebrating Jubilees. For 50, 60 and 75 years these women religious have followed their gospel calling, serving God and the poor and marginalized of our society. Each jubilarian provides insight about her journey in faith, emphasizing the role of Saints Francis and Clare.

Sister Mary Kalis
As I was discerning religious life, my parish priest encouraged me to think about becoming a Franciscan. He said I was sure to like them! Francis’s poverty and simplicity appealed to me, which helped me in my decision.

Sister M Monica Jacobs
As a child, I spent time in the orphanage and was cared for by Franciscan Sisters. Because of this relationship, I just knew I had to become a Franciscan. Learning about Clare and what she did with her life makes me know all the more that I made the right choice.

Sister M Seraphine Stanoch
I was not too acquainted with the life of Saint Francis. Living with the sisters here, it became clear it was a well-chosen life. I’ve read many books on Saint Francis and have been living this life for many years, trying to live as he did.

Sister M Loretto Schneider
I was raised in a religious family and belonged to a Franciscan parish. I attended Catholic schools and knew many Franciscan priests throughout my life. It was just natural for me to choose religious life and become a Franciscan Sister.
Sister M DeSales Malinowski
I felt called to become a religious sister, which led me to the Franciscan way of life. I am inspired by the poverty, simplicity and love of Jesus shared by Saints Francis and Clare.

Sister Elizabeth Weier
Clare’s metaphor, Christ the mirror, and her exhortation to gaze upon him, consider him, and contemplate him encourages me daily to attempt to see God in the scriptures, in the sacraments, in the splendors of creation and in everyday events. Her simple yet profound style of prayer not only shows God’s love for me but shows me who I need to become. Each day is a new beginning when viewed in Christ the mirror.

Sister M Maristell Schanen
During college, I was attracted to the Franciscan ideals of poverty and simplicity which I witnessed in three members of our congregation studying at the same school. During six decades those ideals have continued to beckon. Now in our recent studies of Saint Clare I have felt that call confirmed in the discovery that she, among all the followers of Saint Francis, was the one most faithful to his vision.

Sister Mary Ann Capizzo
So close were Francis and Clare that it is difficult to think of Clare without thoughts of Francis. Clare gazed upon Christ and was moved to see Christ in all of creation. She has inspired me to believe in miracles and answer to prayer. Clare wrote many letters of encouragement helping others toward a closer relationship with God. Likewise I believe sharing my faith opens others to God’s love, peace, joy and healing.

Sister Maureen Kelly
Both Clare and Francis, in living the Gospel, sought to be sensitively responsive to where the Spirit was uniquely leading each of them in everyday life. Their example fuels my longing daily to “desire one thing alone, namely the Spirit of God at work” in me as well.
Sister M Baptista Schik
Clare has been a model in my faith journey in several ways. The gentleness and compassion to her sisters in community and to those she came in contact with has influenced my actions toward others. This leads me to my relationship to Jesus in prayer.

Sister Ardis Cloutier
The distinctive spirituality of Francis has been an integral part of my spiritual development but the particular spirituality of Clare is a recent addition. Clare’s role as co-founder of the Franciscan Order and our own increased focus on our Franciscan charism gives me new insights. The words of Francis, “I have done what is mine to do, let Christ show you what is yours,” and Clare’s “Gaze upon Christ, Consider Christ, Imitate Christ,” have become a vital part of my daily prayer and way of life.

Sister M Adella Blonigen
Saints Francis and Clare have influenced my vocation and faith journey through their spirit of prayer, obedience, charity, poverty and simplicity of life. Daily, I seek to love God above all things and my neighbor as myself.

Sister Anne Furnstahl
In my early formation, I knew very little about Saint Clare. In my journey of faith, through reading, retreats and workshops, I now have a great appreciation of the values of Saint Francis that Clare lived out during her life.

Sister M Eileen Ghesquiere
The simplicity of Saints Francis and Clare has inspired me to treat all persons with respect and reverence, whether they be among the “great,” the “little ones,” or “ordinary people.” Through this simple practice, God has given me fruitful ministries, lifelong friendships and treasured memories.
Sister M Paula Pohlmann

I continue to be inspired by Saint Clare, a noble-blooded woman who did not feel it beneath her dignity to be the foot-washer for her community.

Sister Elizabeth Martell

In the writings of Clare we see her faith in the goodness of people and her deep faith and trust in the goodness of God. Francis and Clare lived the rule Francis wrote which is based on the Gospels. What an extraordinary gift it has been to be called to follow their example.

Sister Marjorie Bischoff

In Clare’s journey to God she lived a life illumined by the four Franciscan virtues of conversion, contemplation, poverty and humility. Clare has been and is a shining light to me as a mentor and guide in living those same Franciscan virtues, especially the prayer of contemplation. My personal journey to God continues in the same spirit of Francis, Clare, all Franciscans before me, and my Community today. What a blessing!

Sister M Christelle Watercott

I have been influenced by Francis since childhood when we listened to the “Hour of St. Francis” on the radio. I learned the Peace Prayer of Saint Francis from hearing it on the radio. I love Francis’s concern for his brothers, for all people, and all of God’s creation, as well as his message of peace to all.

Sister Rose Margaret Schneider

Saint Francis lived a simple life making the Gospel of Jesus the priority of his life and he did it all joyfully. It has been a privilege to be a Franciscan Sister for 50 years and live the Gospel of Jesus and serve others as Francis did. One of the great gifts was to witness the wonderful women in our Franciscan community, including those who have already gone to God, as they live the values of Francis with joy, deep commitment and simplicity. How Blessed I am to walk with my sisters as we live the values of Saints Francis and Clare.
Sister Joanne Klinnert

My fascination with Francis and Clare is their fascination with Jesus. The Jesus of the Gospels who enchanted them revealed God’s amazing love. And He lived in a way that responds to that love. Following their example, I hope to do the same.

Sister M Juanita Mauer

It was Francis and his total surrender to God that attracted me, as it did Clare. The process of conversion for both Francis and Clare has guided me as I strive to surrender to God’s work of conversion in me. That continuous call to deeper conversion comes to me through the words of the Gospel just as it did for Francis and Clare.

Franciscan Sister retires after 40 years of service

Sister M Ida Bursch was honored for her 40 years of service at St. Cloud Children’s Home. Her selfless and faithful service was recognized by Bishop John Kinney, executive director Steve Bresnahan and about 25 sisters, associates, current residents, staff and friends. Mass was concelebrated by Fathers Richard Liesen, Tim Wenzel and Lloyd Haupt. Sister Ida’s retirement brings to a close the Franciscan Sisters’ 114 years of service to orphaned and troubled children in the St. Cloud Diocese. It started in Little Falls in 1893 when the first sisters began caring for orphans; shortly after, the sisters opened St. Otto’s Orphanage. In 1924 the orphans were transferred to the new St. Cloud Orphanage where the sisters continued to care for them. Between 1924 and 2007 at least 171 sisters served there.

Bishop John Kinney congratulates Sister M Ida Bursch.
Ten years ago Faithful Fools Street Ministry, founded by Sister Carmen Barsody and Franciscan Associate Reverend Kay Jorgensen, began doing street retreats in the Tenderloin District of San Francisco. The Tenderloin is the area of the city tour books encourage people to avoid, yet it’s a neighborhood. Families with children, elders and working class people call it home. The street retreat invites us to entertain some deeper thinking as we walk, sit and have conversation with people we meet. We bear witness to ourselves and to those around us.

Sister Susan Knutson participated in the first street retreat and has been a part of almost every retreat for the last 10 years. She says it has become part of her spiritual practice. Susan places a mirror in the center of the circle as she sets up for each retreat. The streets and people of the Tenderloin, and the streets and people in every neighborhood throughout our world, are mirrors to us as individuals and as a society. What do we see when we look in the mirror?

Bernie Glassman writes in his book, Bearing Witness, “When we really listen, when we really pay attention to the sounds of joy and suffering in the universe, we are not separate from them, we become them. Because in the reality we are not separate from those who suffer. We are them. They are us. It is our suffering, and it is our joy.”

The home of Faithful Fools, the “Fool’s Court,” is in the Tenderloin. It is not only home to Kay and Carmen and Alejandra Morcillo Brown from Nicaragua, but it is where many people find “home” through relationships and accompaniment. It is where poets speak, Bible study inspires, people meditate, plays are written, actors perform, assistance is given, food is shared, artists create, tears are shed, clowns are discovered, anger, pain and frustration are named, generosity and strength are vivid, and gratitude and commitment are ten years full.

Faithful Fools Street Ministry celebrates 10 years
Sister Carmen Barsody

Faithful Fools extends to the streets of Nicaragua where they collaborate with Franciscan Associate applicants in the sustaining of a primary school and programs for young mothers.
Partnering into the Future

Sister Bernice Ebner, director of Gift Planning

Many people receive life insurance from their employers as a fringe benefit. But for insurance in excess of $50,000, tax law requires that the employee pay income tax and FICA on the cost of that coverage.

However, when the employee names the Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls, Minnesota, as the sole beneficiary of any portion of the policy, there is no income tax due on the cost for that coverage. For those who do not need the excess protection, this is an excellent gift-planning option. This plan simultaneously lowers both the employee’s and employer’s income tax with no out-of-pocket expense for the donor.

How much is saved? Your potential income tax savings are based on a table of uniform premium rates and your income bracket. For example, consider a 62-year-old employee, with $125,000 of coverage provided by the employer, who directs $75,000 or more of the death benefit to the Franciscan Sisters. This employee/donor will no longer pay income and FICA tax on $1,052 of extra annual income.

Life insurance benefits are easy to contribute. Simply indicate the change of beneficiary on a form available from your employee benefits or personnel department. You will also want to contact your payroll office so it can deduct the cost of the excess coverage insurance gift from your IRS Form W-2 at the end of the year.

Other forms of life insurance gifts can also benefit the Franciscan Sisters while reducing your income tax liability. You may consider contributing a paid-policy, for which you can receive a charitable deduction for an amount roughly equal to the cash value of the policy. Or you may contribute a policy even though you are still making premium payments. In many cases you could then take a charitable deduction for your premium payments.

Please consult your legal and financial advisors before claiming an income tax deduction.

Two dozen walk silently for peace

Sister Bernice Rieland

It was a snowy, treacherous day for driving; however, the Good Friday “Silent Walk for Peace” went on as planned. We gathered at St. Francis Center to begin the walk. We welcomed a couple from North Branch, Minn., who read about this event in Our Journey. They hope to start a walk for peace in their community. The group stopped at Maple Island Park, the Veteran’s Memorial, Bank Square, the court house, jail, St. Mary’s School, St Otto’s Home/Alverna Apartments, and St. Gabriel’s Hospital. At each stop we prayed for persons and intentions related to that stop. For example, at Maple Island Park we prayed that God would bless the earth and all its creatures. At St. Gabriel’s Hospital we prayed for all the sick and those who care for them and the families that God would give them the strength and courage they needed. We concluded each stop with a song for peace.

This event is sponsored by the Franciscan Life Center. Contact: Sister Bernice Rieland at 320-632-0668 or franciscanlifecenter@fslf.org for more information.

Participants took turns carrying a large wooden cross. Here Sister Beatrice Magoka takes her turn.
One-World Mission strengthens tri-parish relationship

Elizabeth Mahoney Rydeen

Jesus came so that “all may have life and have it more abundantly.” John 10:10

With the help of a $750 grant from the One-World Mission Grant Fund, Hermelinda Mendez Rodriguez of San Rafael, Mexico, had the opportunity to visit central Minnesota and the tri-parish community of Freeport, New Munich and St. Rosa. Her visit strengthened the sister parish relationship and proved to be “milestone” for the tri-parish. “She brought with her the affection and humor of a mother from a different country, a different culture. She brought with her the love and compassion of the Mexican people, a love and compassion we do not always see when we look in from the sidelines of life,” notes Deacon Rich Scherping.

For the past three years members of the tri-parish have traveled to San Rafael to work with the Franciscan Sisters in their Mexico mission and get acquainted with the Mexican people and their culture. This “sister” relationship was initiated by the local priest and deacon who serve the tri-parish and their desire to create something that would break down the cultural barriers and address the growing discrimination toward Hispanic people living in the area. Deacon Scherping went on to say that “hopefully this is the beginning of a better understanding of the people from Mexico living and working amongst us in our everyday lives.”

Deacon Rich Scherping: “It is truly amazing how one person can change the hearts of so many people just by being herself. Hermelinda was that person—that gift—that helped many people realize how important it is to help our neighbors.” Pictured here are Father Roger Klassen, Hermelinda Mendez Rodriguez, Deacon Rich Scherping and June Scherping.

The online auction service for nonprofits.

To view inventory online, visit www.missionfish.org.
Keyword: Franciscan.

The Franciscan Sisters accept donations of items for MissionFish. Donors can also designate funds to the Franciscan Sisters by selling items on eBay. For more information, call St. Francis Convent, (320)632-2981.
Community service sentence leads to new relationship

“This is the most rewarding job I’ve ever had,” said Myron Fafara, 54, who volunteers in the St. Francis Convent kitchen. He peels potatoes, sharpens knives, helps with food prep and works in the dish room or wherever he’s needed.

Fafara needed to perform 96 hours of community service as a result of imprisonment for drug sales. Those 96 hours were completed in four months and “now I volunteer because I want to be here. The sisters and staff accept me as I am, not where I came from. They ask me to do something, not tell. They’re grateful; in fact, people I don’t know thank me. This is not work. I enjoy it here – people help one another and work together, just like on the farm in the ’50s when neighbors helped neighbors.”

He continues to volunteer, even though he’s now attending Central Lakes College to be a drug counselor. Clean and sober for two years, he said, “I made some bad choices in the past and now I am living by example. I tell my story so that others may learn and make better choices than I.”

Myron Fafara volunteers in the St. Francis Convent kitchen.

Save the date!

St. Francis High School
All-school Reunion

July 18-19, 2009

St. Francis Convent, Little Falls, Minn.
More information will be available this fall.
In loving memory

Sister Mary David (Veronica) Miranowski, 90, died February 29, 2008, at St. Francis Convent, Little Falls, Minn. Sister David was born March 24, 1917, near Kent, Minn. She was the third of nine children of the late Anton and Magdalen (Schwiep) Miranowski. Accepted as a Franciscan Sister on August 12, 1938, she made first profession of vows on August 12, 1940, and final vows on August 12, 1943.

Sister Mary David became a lab and x-ray technician at St. Francis Hospital, Breckenridge, Minn., and a licensed practical nurse at State School of Science, Wahpeton, N. Dak. She served in Breckenridge, Perham, Alexandria, Onamia, Moorhead, and Little Falls, Minn.; and Dodgeville and Cudahy, Wis. In retirement she volunteered in St. Clare Library and later in the Community Relations Department (CRD) at the Motherhouse.

Sister Mary David touched many hearts in quiet and gentle ways that told of her thoughtful and caring nature. She was a perfectionist and an artist with a wonderful mind for detail as exhibited by the creative cards she produced with precision. She was blessed with beautiful penmanship put to good use in addressing hundreds of greeting and Christmas cards to our donors for CRD. One of her, almost daily, joys was pointing out some humorous cartoon or interesting fact that she had read in a newspaper or magazine.

Sister Mary Felicia (Gertrude) Kroll, 86, died May 3, 2008, at St. Francis Convent, Little Falls, Minn. Sister Felicia was born November 15, 1921, near Royalton, Minn. She was the second of 16 children born to William and Rose (Cekalla) Kroll. She was accepted as a Franciscan Sister of Little Falls, Minnesota, on August 12, 1938. She made first profession of vows on August 12, 1940, and final vows on August 12, 1945.


Sister Felicia had a deep love and faith in God and was most grateful for the blessings she received throughout her life. She had a love for people and was at her best when she interacted with them on a one-to-one basis. She was skilled in knitting, tatting, crocheting, painting and other crafts. In her later years she enjoyed reaching out to the home-bound and the sick, often visiting them in their homes or via the telephone.
2008 Green Fair & Peace Concert

We invite you to exhibit your "green and sustainable" products and services or to promote your earth-friendly message to the public, free of charge. All groups are welcome—businesses, organizations, churches, families. In 2008, we are adding some new, fun opportunities including free chair massages, storytelling, an eco-friendly style show and peace drumming and dance.

This wonderful community event is a free, non-political celebration.

For more information and to register your exhibit, visit our website: www.fslf.org/greenfair.html

Wednesday, July 30th
4–8PM, Concert begins at 6PM

Join us on the west lawn of St. Francis campus for an evening of ecological awareness with music, food, activities and exhibits.

Our Journey

Name _____________________________ Address ________________________________
City ______________________________ State, Zip+4 __________________________

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