



FALL 2012

VOL. 31 No. 1

Our Journey



2012 Green Fair Folk Festival

At a glance...

2012 Green Fair Folk Festival: another grand event

Over 50 exhibitors promoted earth-friendly products and ways to live a more “green” lifestyle. There was much to learn and plenty of activities for children. Little Falls police were on hand to promote bicycle safety and encourage youth to wear helmets.

Talented musicians from St. Francis Music Center performed throughout the evening. The Rick Family (pictured on the cover) was a crowd favorite.



Music Center receives CHI planning grant

St. Francis Music Center is the recipient of a Violence Prevention planning grant through Catholic Health Initiative's Mission and Ministry Fund. This “planning” grant will allow the Music Center to develop a mentorship program for at-risk youth in Morrison County that focuses on music and the arts. With violence

prevention as the goal, the grant gives the Music Center the opportunity to serve rural youth who may experience violence in their homes or have a propensity toward violence themselves. The program will address bullying and the violence that comes from making bad choices about alcohol and drug use, which leads to greater violence and, especially in our rural area, teen suicides. Over the years, the Music Center's staff has witnessed first-hand the transformation that studying music and participating in the arts can make in the life of a child or teen, especially one who is marginalized and struggling with making good, healthy decisions.



Greg Langlois (right) will develop the Music Center's new mentorship program.

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Our Journey is published three times a year by the Community Relations Department of the Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls, Minnesota, for donors, associates, friends, relatives and employees. This publication shares the journeys of our sisters and associates as they work in joyful service in the spirit of Saints Francis and Clare.

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Cover: The 2012 Green Fair Folk Festival. Photos by Kari Ross.

Our Mission:

We, Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls, Minnesota, are a community of women religious whose members are called to live the Gospel joyfully and to reverence the earth and all of God's creation. In the spirit of Saints Francis and Clare, we embody a life of prayer, simple living and service to those in need. We are committed to nonviolence as we recognize the need for healing in ourselves and in our world. We seek to build communities of peace and justice wherever we are called to serve.

From the Leadership team...

Dear Friends,

Lately, American women religious have been widely covered in the news as the drama of the Vatican Congregation for Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) issued a mandate for the reform of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR), the national organization that represents 56,000 women religious in the United States. The media have kept the issue before the public since the mandate was publicized in April, some emphasizing the conflict, which tapped into an increasing polarization between many of the lay faithful and the Church hierarchy, and others attempting to bring clarity and understanding to the issue.

Groups around the country have rallied in support of women religious, highlighting the contribution they have made through their service and their presence in individuals' lives. As these women religious adapted their ministries and style of life after Vatican Council II's direction to renew and revitalize in response to God's presence in a changing world, they came in touch with people in parishes, social service centers, county agencies and so many other ways. We went about doing our ministry, living out our call to witness to God's loving compassion, without saying much about who we were and why we were doing what we were doing. In a way, women religious moved from a well-kept secret to a very public reality through the media coverage, the rallies and through the "Nuns on a Bus" tour sponsored by Network, a Catholic Public Policy Lobby (not part of LCWR).

LCWR chose to enter into prayerful reflection and to maintain public silence until it had the opportunity to meet with the leaders of the 1500 congregations that make up their membership. In August, in St. Louis, 900+ members gathered to reaffirm the role of LCWR in assisting its members to carry out collaborative leadership to accomplish the mission of Christ in today's world, to foster dialog and collaboration among religious congregations and other groups concerned with the needs of society, and to develop models to strengthen religious leadership skills.

We affirmed our love for the Church and our desire to work with others to accomplish the mission of Christ in today's world. We celebrated the charism/gift we women religious bring to the Church—that is the grace to be deeply embedded in God and grounded in the Gospel, to listen to the poor and disenfranchised who Jesus so favored, and to bring their voice and their need to the heart of the Church. We recognized that what was happening was bigger than LCWR and our response would have an impact on the broader church, especially women in our church. Our desire was to work with the tension between ecclesiastical/church realities and religious life in a positive way so that the church might be enriched, not torn apart by it. In the end, we unanimously affirmed moving forward in dialog with Archbishop Peter Sartain, the apostolic delegate appointed by CDF, in the hope of increasing the understanding between church leadership and women religious, and of creating more possibilities for the laity and, particularly for women, to have a voice in the church.

The dialog has been begun. Archbishop Sartain met with the officers and executive director and the National Board of LCWR the weekend after the LCWR assembly. Let us pray it continues with open, listening hearts and good faith by all parties involved.

Thank you for your love and support and for journeying with us!

Sister Beatrice Eichten
Sister Susan Krutson

Sister Rose Margaret Schneider
Sister Conalita Mauer



A jar of thankfulness for the sisters' many ministries

Sister Maristell: teacher to the end

Sister Grace Skwira



Sister Grace Skwira lives and ministers in Monterrey, Mexico.

The day before Sister Maristell Schanen passed away I had the honor of being with her during her last lucid hours. Let me share, in my own humble words, the revelation and spiritual experience she shared. I believe that I was meant to be the carrier of the message, as you will see.

I hadn't planned to visit Sister Maristell that

afternoon; however, when the two sisters I intended to visit were not in their rooms, I spontaneously knocked on her door and found her sitting in her chair, so excited to invite me in. We had a spirited conversation on a wide variety of topics. She was eager to talk, to ask questions and to listen. I worried that I was tiring her, but the conversation continued on. Finally, I bid her good-bye amidst hugs, thanking her for the conversation. As I opened the door to leave, she called out in a strong, urgent voice, "Come back! I want to tell you something!" I wondered what it could be, since we already had such a long visit about so many things. She told me to pull up the chair and sit down. Facing her, I felt like a student at the foot of the teacher, waiting to hear her wisdom. She began, and I share here as I heard it:

"During my morning prayer," she said, "I had a revelation about the Trinity. The Trinity is a mystery, and it is so very difficult to ever explain or understand the three persons in one God. But, I received a clarity that even children can understand. What was revealed to me is that God is Truth, Goodness and Beauty." She went on, "God is truth; Jesus often spoke of the Truth. And, God is good, which is what our Franciscan theology tells us. And, God is beauty; it is the Holy Spirit who inspires us to see beauty. And it came to me to see this in an apple. The apple is true to what it is (truth); an apple is goodness (it tastes good); and an apple is beautiful (beautiful to look at). These three qualities make the

apple what it is. These three attributes: truth, goodness and beauty are who God is. All three are necessary for God to be what God is, just as all three are needed to make an apple what an apple is."

I sat there in awe, touched by the profound and beautiful message. I told Sister Maristell how much I appreciated it and wished that she could share it with others. "Oh," she said, "I plan to do that. There are so many people writing about the Trinity at this time, and some of their writings border on heresy, so I want to write this up and 'get it out there.'" She continued, "I only hope that I will have the energy to do so." I promised her my prayers for the energy and strength she would need to complete that task.

Then, for the second time, I bid Sister Maristell good-bye, once again with affection and words of gratitude. As I walked away from her room, I thought how strange and unusual it was that she beckoned me back into her room with such urgency to share her experience. Just a few hours later, when we got the news that Sister Maristell was no longer responding, I was stunned. Then, I knew why she called me back. She was compelled to give her spiritual message to someone, as her time was nearing the end. And I was to be the messenger.

Shortly before 2 a.m., I returned to Sister Maristell's room, taking my turn to sit with her until dawn. Within minutes she took her last breath. It was both an amazing privilege to receive her profound message on the Trinity and to have been with her at the moment of death.

Year-end tax statements

The thank you letters you receive after each gift are intended to serve as your year-end tax document. By doing this, we save a few more trees and postage costs. If you need other documentation, please let us know before year's end.

Franciscan Sisters serve, enjoy life in Hastings

Sister Elise Saggau

Sisters LaVonne Schackmann and Hope Uphoff both served for many years as nurses in health care institutions of the Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls and in other facilities as well. Later in life, both shifted gears to serve in pastoral capacities, using their health care background to good advantage in offering spiritual care to both the infirm and those who care for them.

For the past 14 years they have lived together in Hastings, Minn., on the beautiful banks of the Mississippi River. Sister LaVonne works at Regina Medical Center, a lovely Catholic facility that retains the special Christian character given it originally by the Sisters of Charity of Our Lady Mother of Mercy from Holland. At present Regina includes a hospital and various senior living options.

In 1998, Sister LaVonne joined Father James Dunne, a legendary figure at Regina, as the only chaplains. Now the facility has a Pastoral Care director and four staff chaplains. Sister LaVonne offers pastoral/spiritual care services for residents in the nursing home, transitional care unit, memory care communities, and in the assisted living areas. With this comes the privilege of one-on-one visitation, ministry to the dying and to their families, leading prayers and inspirational services. She works in close collaboration with other staff and other departments such as Nursing and Activities.

When Sister Hope moved to Hastings, she found employment as a nurse at Augustana Health Care Center. Upon retiring in 2005, she continued as a volunteer at Augustana, working with returned medications. She also visited patients. In 2006, she became a chapel companion at Regina Medical Center, a volunteer position she has held ever since. As a chapel companion, she comes five days a week to help wheel residents to Mass, stay with them during services, and return them to their rooms later. She describes this work as “so much fun, such dear people.” She tries to arrive early and visit the residents at breakfast, which she calls “shared joy—a way to connect with their lives.”

Sisters LaVonne and Hope share a third-floor apartment along with household chores and prayer



After 14 years, Sisters Hope Uphoff and LaVonne Schackmann find that no matter where they go in the area, someone knows them or they know someone. “It is a good feeling,” they say.

times. They try to grow flowers on their north-facing balcony and juggle schedules to include all their activities. Whenever possible, they attend Mass together at their parish, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, but they are regulars at the liturgies conducted at Regina, where a resident priest says Mass daily.

For enjoyment, they love going down to the river or out to see Vermillion Falls. They get involved in local community efforts such as walks for Alzheimer’s research and packing bags of food for starving children.

Both sisters find working and living in Hastings very rewarding and a wonderful opportunity to share Franciscan values. Sister Hope enjoys talking to the residents about Saint Francis. “They all know several stories: Francis and the birds, Francis and the wolf of Gubbio. When they want to know more, I share stories about the depth of his spirituality.” In many ways, by their lives and by their ministries, by what they say and by what they do, these sisters testify to the beautiful spirituality of the Franciscan charism.

Around the world in 50 years

Sister Adela Gross

2012 marks the 50th anniversary of the Franciscan Sisters' first international mission: "Peru in '62." This article is the last in a series on the missionary experience.

Heeding the call to mission of Pope John XXIII in 1962, the Franciscan Sisters responded immediately and enthusiastically—more than 120 Sisters indicated their willingness to serve as missionaries. While their first efforts were directed toward Latin America, these were quickly followed by ministries in Africa and Asia. Over the past 50 years, almost 40 Franciscan Sisters, and many volunteers, have ministered in 15 countries for periods ranging from nine months to more than 30 years. The impact of our ministries in far-flung lands has been felt not only by the missionaries themselves and those among whom they ministered, but on the entire Franciscan community and on those among whom we have lived and served here at home.

A growing global consciousness and increasing awareness of the lives of the poor in so many places led us to question policies and practices that created such great disparity in our world. We learned how the policies of our government can affect people around the world in negative ways, while enriching the coffers of the multinational corporations and their investors. We learned a deep respect for cultures and traditions other than we had known previously.

Some of those sisters missioned to other countries have expressed how their experiences impacted their lives and later ministries.

Sister Rose Mae Rausch: Venezuela and Mexico

This experience really deepened my faith. The Latino people worship a "Living God." God is very close to them, and the saints are special friends. Their deep devotion to Mary influenced me greatly. Participating in religious activities, such as processions which might last for hours, were deeply spiritual for me.

Sister Fran Kempenich: Peru

I was part of the first group of missionaries, so our experience at the Language School in Cuernavaca, Mexico, opened for us a whole new view of Church. Msgr. Ivan Illich, the director of the school, was a very prophetic person, who challenged us in many ways. He prepared us for the realities of the Church in Latin America, which were very different from what we had known of Church in rural Minnesota.

Sister Anita Jennissen: Peru, Colombia, Mexico, Tanzania, Kenya, Senegal

During our preparation for mission, we were told to remember that we are guests in the country to which we are assigned. As guests, we looked to our hosts to show us how things are done. We learned to appreciate the gifts of other cultures, to better judge our own culture, to realize that all is not perfect in any culture. We were given a broader vision of life and of the world. I am so grateful for that!

Sister Carol Virnig: Peru and Bolivia

I found myself with a new global consciousness; I found the Word of God, living and active, in other cultures. We looked for the leadership that already existed in the areas where we served and assisted them to develop their potential. That way, we worked ourselves out of a job and could move on to other areas.

Sister Patricia Forster: Venezuela and Mexico (still serving)

I found my spirit come alive in working with the poor! The rich resource of Spanish-speaking sisters and the influx of Hispanic immigrants to the United States came together. The Spirit led us, as we returned from Latin America, to



For 50 years generous donations have allowed the Franciscan Sisters to minister internationally. Today, support from donors helps us continue our missionary work in Mexico, Ecuador and Nicaragua. Thank you!



Sister Karen Niedzielski, Kenya, 2004



Sister Joanne Klinnert, Nicaragua, 1991

again serve those who needed us. This was a great gift of our Franciscan Community to the Church and is helping to create a new multicultural Church in the United States.

Sister Karen Niedzielski: Tanzania and Kenya

The most important value I received from my mission experience is that we are all brothers and sisters with one God as our Creator. I came to share my gifts, but I received so much more from them. It was also a very humbling experience to receive from someone who shared from the little they have. I had to receive their gifts, even when I knew I had so much. I love the simple lifestyle I was able to live. I learned that I needed very little to live well and joyfully!

Sister Joanne Klinnert: Venezuela and Nicaragua

On a Sunday afternoon in Managua, Nicaragua, under a big tree, local settlers were planning the building of a new barrio. Sisters Carolyn Law and Carmen Barsody and I were there to ask permission to live/work/build with them. We said, "We are Franciscan Sisters. We are not here to build a church. We are not here to build a school or a clinic. We want to live here." We were welcomed and appointed

a lot on which to build a house. Over time we built a Soy Kitchen, gathered a group of youth, taught health and natural medicines, all at their request. I learned that people know what they need, that presence is the best ministry, and that remembering people can energize them for years!

Sister Noreen Bentfield: Cameroon and Tanzania

Being in Africa for 12 years taught me many lessons, namely the importance of hospitality to all, especially the stranger, and being present to a person is more important than getting a task done.

What richness we have received from these 50 years of reaching out to the ends of the earth! And we can never forget those who made all this possible: visionary leadership in our community, caring generous donors, mission groups, parishes, schools—so many who gave of themselves so that we could, in your name, make alive in others the message of Jesus, a message of love without borders! May we continue that mission for the next 50 years!

Inspiring, encouraging and empowering: the Vatican II Documents

Associate Geri Dietz

When I was younger and someone asked me about the Vatican II Documents, I would swiftly excuse myself to the ladies room or say something to the effect that my mom was calling me home for dinner, even though I was 23 years old and Mom was six states away. Just the phrase “Vatican II Documents” seemed intimidating. Besides, though I had not read the documents, I knew about the Council, right?

The Vatican II Council opened under Pope John XXIII in 1962 for the purpose of addressing relations between the church and the modern world. He called over 2500 bishops and superiors of male religious orders together; he even invited “observers” from other Christian churches. It was the largest gathering of any Council in church history. The Council ended in 1965 and changes took place in many life-giving forms.

For example, in the changes to the liturgy, I experienced speaking in the vernacular, receiving communion in the hand, not having to wear hats, veils or hankies on my head, singing at “folk Masses” and seeing more presence of lay lectors and Eucharistic ministers. Certain traditions relaxed, like no meat on all Fridays. Other faiths’ truths were to be recognized, too. These

changes allowed for more intentional participation at church and a more focused life on discipleship. Yes, I lived into the experiences of Vatican II but not to a fuller understanding...until I started to read the Vatican II Documents themselves.

In a way that a Council had never done before, this Council looked at the world, loved it and saw the world was good:

“All the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their heart....they have welcomed the news of salvation which is meant for every person. That is why this community realizes that it is truly linked with humankind and its history by the deepest of bonds.” *Gaudium et Spes*, 1965

So we ask, what are our joys and hopes? What are our sorrows and anxieties? What are the deepest bonds that unite us all? As Christians, all our joys, hopes, griefs and anxieties are shared because we share in the Body of Christ and it moves our hearts to prayer and act for all people. We are compelled to respond to one another’s needs because **“salvation is meant for every person.”** Perhaps that is why this particular document is called the “Pastoral Constitution on the Church In the Modern World” (emphasis mine). The church is not above the world or below the world; rather, it lives “in” the world and shares in the world’s troubles and joys. As the Body of Christ, we are all participants in life’s affairs.

Benedictine Father Godfrey Diekmann, OSB, directly shared in the affairs and issues of Vatican II and was regarded by many as one of the giants of the church and a key participant in the work of Vatican II. For him, the most important goal of the Council was to recover for all people full and confident approachability to an intimate life with Jesus. Indeed, the Documents point to a relationship with Jesus in our daily lives.

The “Universal Call to Holiness” (another document) calls for people to search for an authentic meaningful relationship with Jesus as disciples. And

Continued on page 14.



Geri Dietz, minister of Associates

Celebrating Vatican II, Part 3

Sister Maristell Schanen

When John XXIII directed the 21st Ecumenical Council to look at the role and mission of the Church in the late 20th century, outstanding theologians with differing viewpoints studied and argued important issues. Men like Congar, deLubac and Ratzinger (now Benedict XVI) brought accurate understanding of Scripture and the Church Fathers, assuring the roots of doctrine found in Tradition. Others like Rahner and John Courtney Murray worked to integrate modern human experience with Church principles based in the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. Of 16 promulgated documents two controversial and very greatly needed in our world today were “Nostra Aetate” on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions and “Dignitate Humanae” on Religious Freedom.

Nostra Aetate (In our time...), recognizing that humankind is being drawn closer together by various and strengthening ties between different peoples of the world, examined the relationship between the Church and non-Christian religions. As bonds develop, the Church sees the need to promote unity and love among peoples and nations by looking at what all have in common and what the Church can offer to draw all into fellowship. The basis for this task is that humankind is one community originating from the same source to live over the face of the earth and having the same final goal of fulfillment in God through the saving design extended to every human being.

Mentioning the basic questions of all humanity, the declaration then points out the various concepts and developed rules and rites of each of the religions from the most advanced to the primitive: Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Judaism, native, even those that espouse no religion. Although these differ from



Sister Maristell Schanen

Christian thought, they have elements of Truth in them and must be not only respected but accorded collaboration in dialogue and service to the human community in justice and peace. There is no foundation for discrimination against anyone. Since the Vietnam War, our community has been involved in dialogue with non-Christian religions through various services.

Dignitate Humanae (“A sense of the dignity of the human person”) was largely the effort of John Courtney Murray, an American Jesuit,

bringing the experience of our own freedoms in this country. The document clearly explains that religious freedom is grounded in the dignity due to the very nature of the human person created in the image and likeness of God. Consequently, it is in accord with truth and justice, is known in the truth of one’s conscience which obligates the person to fulfill religious duties to God and society, is never to be coerced by anyone or anything and, therefore, must be protected by civil government. Because the human being is a social being, the same freedom belongs to religious communities such as Church, parish, social units and the family.

This inviolate freedom must be exercised in human society with personal and social responsibility for moral principles. Since it must be protected and religious life must be fostered by civil government, it is subject to regulatory norms. Everyone must respect the rights of others and fulfill their duties in justice and charity for the common welfare of all. Finally, government has the right to defend itself against abuses committed on the pretext of religious freedom. It is to be controlled by juridical norms in conformity with the objective moral order. Through our involvement in the political process, the members of our community stay involved with the need to protect religious freedom.

Sister Maristell Schanen, prolific contributor to *Our Journey*, passed away July 6. She wrote this article before her death.

Brooklyn Center community gives living green a new meaning

Elizabeth Mahoney Rydeen

When a new living group was formed in a rented house in Brooklyn Center, the members (Sisters Louise Bauer, Gert Brixius, Mary Hroschikoski and Michelle L'Allier) laid a foundation for green living by getting an energy audit of their late 1950s house and ordering the largest recycling bin and smallest trash bin available from their waste management service. The sisters recycle everything their service allows and reuse as much as possible. Cloth bags for grocery shopping are a priority as is washing and reusing plastic bags. Rarely will you see these sisters taking a plastic bag from stores or use a paper towel for spills.

The sisters' commitment to sustainable living is reflected in the food they eat. Sister Gert, who does most of the grocery shopping, purchases food and household items in bulk from the local coop whenever possible and regularly buys from the local farmers markets. Sister Mary maintains their substantial herb and vegetable garden. They strive to eat fewer processed foods, less meat and almost no beef, mindful that methane production by cows is a significant contributor to global climate change. Waste is minimal...even grey water from the kitchen goes into the compost bin.

Conscious of water as a precious gift, the sisters installed low-flow shower and faucet heads. They shower quickly. Laundry is done in cold water, supplemented in

summer by what collects in the dehumidifier buckets. You may have guessed: a camper's clothesline, strung between backyard trees, takes the place of a gas dryer whenever weather allows.

Special attention is given to reducing the energy to cool and heat their house: removable plastic sheeting and caulking keeps out the cold; ceiling and floor fans reduce the need for air conditioning and the planting of vines on the house's west side controls summer heat as well. Strategic opening and closing of windows and curtains also helps moderate interior temperatures. Sharing rides, combining errands and using public transportation reduce the sisters' carbon footprint, as does minimizing new purchases. Sister Michelle routinely helps them negotiate their shared use of cars in the group. The sisters frequent thrift stores, garage sales and FSLF "swap shops." They share some magazine subscriptions with sisters in different houses, while Sister Louise brings their other read magazines to be enjoyed again at the nursing home where she ministers. All are regular users of their public library.

Caring for Mother Earth is a core Franciscan value and a way of life for our Franciscan community. The sisters in Brooklyn Center feel that while they each have their favorite and most faithful ways of living green, Sister Gert is often the one who encourages them to do more by her admonition and example. The commitment and collective effort that Sisters Gert, Mary, Louise and Michelle share result in living more sustainably than any of them could do alone.



(Left) In 2006 a new living group was formed on Quarles Road in Brooklyn Center where living green takes on a life of its own. Clockwise from top left: Sisters Mary Hroschikoski, Gert Brixius, Louise Bauer and Michelle L'Allier.

(Right) Sister Louise uses a push mower. How green!

Transition Initiative: none of us can do it alone

Sister Jan Kilian

Many visitors are drawn to Clare's Well Spirituality Farm by the word Farm in the name of our retreat center. "Farm" connects some of our guests to memories of a childhood home or childhood visits to Grandma and Grandpa's. We hear frequent reports of someone driving into the yard and, upon seeing a silo, red barn and chickens scattered all around, feeling like they have come home. For the Franciscan Sisters who founded Clare's Well, "farm" says we are intentionally living as close to Earth as possible as our way to live as close to God as possible. It is no cliché to say, as Saint Francis said, we are one family on this planet. Providing hospitality for anyone who asks to come and caring for these 40 acres, we enjoy quite a wide diversity of people and other forms of life. The diversity in which we are immersed is a window to increase our awareness of God's never-ending creativity. This increasing awareness comes with increasing responsibilities.

There is an urgent need to protect the health of Earth's living systems on which we all depend. They are not ours to simply use up. This summer we've received a number of persons turning to us as Franciscan Sisters who live on a farm to express a mutual desire to reverse the pollution of God's gifts of land, water and air. Two of our friends, Joan Pauly Schneider and Julie Surma, recently came with their spouses, Dan and John, to invite us to become part of a growing dialogue called the Transition Initiative. The Transition Initiative as defined by its founder, Rob Hopkins, "is a place where there's a community-led process that helps town/village/city/neighborhood become stronger and happier." Begun several years ago, the initiative has over a thousand communities in 35 countries with 75 in the United States. Neighbors and local leaders come together to challenge the assumption that operating on high levels of energy consumption, with high carbon emissions

and massive environmental impact can go on indefinitely. Their focus is to move from oil dependency to local resilience. "We demonstrated great ingenuity and intelligence as we raced up the energy curve over the last 150 years. There's no reason why we can't use those qualities, and more, as we negotiate our way . . . back towards the sun and air."

Transition Initiative community leaders use a proactive approach to draw others in to figure out the kind of future that works for ALL of us. They are looking at key areas of food production, energy, transport, health, shared livelihoods and psychology of change. This effort is quite contrary to that of voices we hear every day: "Buy more! Our economy can't survive if you don't use more." However, as governments and big business push for "growth," we see increased environmental destruction, income inequality, poverty and violent competitiveness for resources to meet basic needs. If we don't do something about it, who will? None of us can do it alone, but neighbors working together will make a difference.

Helpful Resources

Video: "The Economics of Happiness" available through www.theeconomicsofhappiness.org and www.transitionus.org

The Transition Handbook: from oil dependency to local resilience, by Rob Hopkins



Sister Paula Pohlmann harvests tomatoes planted by Sister Carol Schmit in Clare's Well garden.

Donating to the Franciscan Sisters: Please, feel free to express any wishes you may have for your gift. However, be advised that in order to ensure that donors will be entitled to a federal income tax deduction, 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.

Prayer for Vocations

Loving God, called forth
by the example of Jesus
and inspired by the spirit
of Francis and Clare,
we are Your heart,
voice, and hands
in service to one another.
We are called by our Franciscan Values of
Continual Conversion, Contemplation,
Poverty and Humility,
to embrace all who are marginalized
in society and church,
to heal the sources of Mother Earth's wounds,
and to work faithfully
for global justice and peace.
We commit ourselves
to rebuild the church, the people of God.
We should desire one thing alone,
namely, the Spirit of God
at work within us.
We pray that through the witness
of Gospel-centered lives
people are drawn to join
our Franciscan Community.
This we pray with complete trust in You,
the Source of all being.
Amen!

—Written by Sisters Ange Mayers and
Carmen Barsody; Geri Dietz and friends

Faith and Fun with Franciscans draws 30 'campers'

Sister Ange Mayers

Girls from Little Falls, Royalton, Bowlus, Rice, Foley, Belgrade, Frazee, Randall, St. Cloud, Waite Park, Foreston, Wadena, Milaca, Morris, Minneapolis, Minnetonka, Avon and Cold Spring, Minn., and Osawatomie and Paola, Kans., gathered for the fifth annual Girls' Camp. Faith and Fun with Franciscans created opportunities to bond with each other and with Franciscan Sisters. Attendees blessed their tents with precious water and sprigs of pine. Every girl stenciled a t-shirt with a rainbow and dove (Holy Spirit), beaded a peace bracelet, and decorated the cover of a journal (in which to record her reflections). Stories of Saint Francis of Assisi, singing and eating around a campfire, listening to the sisters tell their stories of being in Peru, Venezuela and Cambodia, and having the ability to proclaim the Word at Liturgies stimulated reflections for journal writing. After three full days, the girls were sent forth, anointed with oil and affirmative words, some anticipating next year's retreat. When asked, "What was special about your presence at this camp experience," two girls responded: "God was in my presence the whole time" and "I felt like God was there watching over us."

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Sister Joan Gerads (home from her mission work in Ecuador) visits with one of the "campers."

Franciscan Reflection

Revelations

Sister Ade Kroll

In Advent we hear: A child shall lead them.

In the full bus, packed to overflowing actually, everyone's attention was drawn to a small boy holding a scrap of wood with extreme care. One lady couldn't bear it any longer and asked him why he was being so careful about this worthless scrap of wood. He explained, "I am taking a little ant for a ride. She's my great friend. It's her first trip on the bus."

—Dom Camara

"She's my great friend." The adult smiles to hear of this relationship. Surely it is a child's way of seeing the world. There is a secret knowing that this will pass. It is not something that one carries into adulthood. This deadening to the relationship with our "great friends" among all the planetary diversity is built into the culture. There comes a time when the child will no longer carry the ant as a friend into shared adventures on a stick, but will perhaps pursue the ant with a similar stick. We don't even marvel at this switch in relationship. We shrug our shoulders and say, "This is how it is."

The child shows us how to SEE. In nature, when we SEE, we find an astonishing image of God. And when we LOOK, it includes the whole story of nature from the first fire, the stars and galaxies, the planets and, our favorite, Earth with its mystery of life and the marvelous development of thought through which we can KNOW. We know we are related to all that is (way back to those first stars). We can know that which we call God—which is unique to humans. We can also know we have a mission and the destiny toward and with this Earth.

Father Thomas Berry says, "Earth's crisis is fundamentally spiritual." Spirituality for Thomas Berry was about enchantment, awe, wonder. Without these we find suffering unbearable and become sick. When we can SEE the universe and the Earth that gave us birth as sacred mysteries we have the key to turning the world around. Thomas Aquinas wrote: "A mistake about creation means a mistake about God." Have we



Sister Ade Kroll and George, a friend of the Faithful Fools

forgotten that the revelation found in the natural world and in the wider universe around us is the primary divine revelations? And so it follows that when we destroy the natural world, we destroy the ground of our religious imagination.

At Thursday's Bible study with the homeless, we shared an image of a tree. My image, as I walked toward the tree, was of a sun-splashed sugar-gum tree all green and golden. As I got close, it reached out its green-gold leafy branches and gently wrapped me in a hug. I was so surprised. I am still in awe and blessed. The tree was a hugger! What a revelation of the divine among us!

And now it's time to find an ant or ladybug...to SEE and WONDER and be in AWE.

Welcome, Franciscan Community Volunteers



The new group of Franciscan Community Volunteers was officially commissioned August 13 at St. Francis Convent, Little Falls. We welcome Kristine Origone, Corey Dossey, Lisa Yanzer, Philip Lomneth, Maureen Reynolds and Shannon Hagerty!

Kristine Origone is from Lodi, Calif., where she worked as a speech pathologist assistant. With FCV she will be working at Catholic Charities as the immigrant and refugee program assistant.

Corey Dossey, from Conroe, Tex., recently graduated from Texas A&M University. She will be working at Talahi Elementary School as a support services assistant.

Lisa Yanzer is from Holmen, Wis. She recently completed her term of service with Jesuit Volunteer Corps before joining FCV. She will be working with all the St. Cloud district schools as the assistant for the autism resource program.

Philip Lomneth, from Omaha, Neb., recently graduated from St. Olaf College. He will be working at the Great River Interfaith Partnership as the racial equity organizer and researcher.

Maureen Reynolds is from Brooklyn Park, Minn. She recently graduated from St. Thomas University and will be working at Lutheran Social Services as a refugee caseworker.

Shannon Hagerty, from St. Francis, Minn., is a recent graduate of St. Cloud State University. She will be working at the St. Cloud Children's Home as a clinical support assistant.

Vatican II Documents, continued

where do we, the laity, live it out?

[We] “live in the ordinary circumstances of family and social life, from which the very web of our existence is woven. They [the laity] are called there by God that by exercising their proper function and led by the spirit of the Gospel they may work for the sanctification of the world from within as a leaven.” *The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, 31

It is in the context of our regular life with family,

friends, society, church and the world that we live out our call to holiness by being disciples of Jesus. Being a Franciscan Associate has greatly influenced how I live an authentic, meaningful expression of discipleship.

The Vatican II Documents should not be avoided, but treasured! They are easy to read and inspiring. Saint Francis points to living a gospel-centered life where the world is his cloister. By being disciples who serve others with all the joys, hopes, griefs and anxieties in the world, we humbly serve Christ.

Sister Lillian Kroll's paintings featured in art show

Sister Lillian Kroll first used a variety of materials and mediums as an elementary school art teacher. In her retirement years, she now focuses on watercolor painting as a way of taking her out of herself and into a world of color, of feeling an energy and exhilaration she only feels as the color takes its shape on paper, of seeing in nature what she never saw before and delighting in the finished product.

Often during prayer or a retreat, an image presents itself. Watercolor has a transparency that she loves, and the extravagance of God's beauty in creation and revelation often brings her into a mystical experience.

Sister Lillian had her first solo art show in 2009 in Brainerd. Since then, her work has been displayed at the Family Medical Clinic and Great River Arts (Little Falls), at Five Wings Arts (Staples), and at the Benedictine Monastery (St. Paul).



Sister Lillian Kroll: "I believe my art expresses and reveals my inner spirit and soul as an act of love."

Reflections on Nature

September 5 – October 28, 2012

Featuring works by Sister Lillian Kroll

Artist's Reception Saturday, September 22, 1-3 pm

Evelyn Matthies Porthole Gallery

712 Washington Street, Brainerd, Minn.

Little Falls man 'pays it forward'

Deanna V. Boone

Do you remember the 2000 movie *Pay It Forward* featuring Haley Joel Osment as a boy who launches a good-will movement, Helen Hunt as his single mother and Kevin Spacey as his social-studies teacher? Essentially, it's about doing something kind and unexpected for others as a model for more people to do something kind and unexpected for others.

The movie ends sadly, yet hopeful for humankind. Let me tell you about a real-life pay-it-forward man,



Lenny, from Little Falls. He called out of the blue and asked if he could make a donation toward the Green Fair Folk Festival. He wanted to give money to offset the costs of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and fresh popcorn, two items offered at the fair. People lined up at the Franciscan Sisters' food booth, graciously receiving nourishment thanks to Lenny's generous donation.

Lenny didn't see it, of course, but his gift put smiles on people's faces. He said he wanted to "give because I'm nearing the end of my life." The truth of the matter is that Lenny has been giving to others and paying it forward for a long time. Just mention his name around Little Falls and you'll hear stories of his kind heart and generous nature.

This real-life story has its own happy/sad ending. Lenny is coping with serious health issues, yet he chose to honor the Franciscan Sisters whose work he has long admired and to remember his own sister, Sister Mary Emmanuel. We have seen the face of God ... in Lenny.

Anne Heisick (left) and Robyn Gray (right) present homemade bread and jelly to Lenny in thanks for his generous donation to the Green Fair Folk Festival.

Partnering into the Future

Sister Bernice Ebner, director of Gift Planning



The planning and writing of a will is both a family obligation and a personal privilege. We live in a nation of laws. When we are born, our birth is registered as required by law. Throughout life, we comply with legal requirements when we

purchase a home, pay taxes and secure a passport.

When we die, our passing is noted by a death certificate and in the probate process. In all of life's activities, the law is there. One of the most important legal opportunities each of us faces pertains to the future ownership of our possessions and the distribution of assets. Before we die, we can make a will that determines how our estate will be handled.

In the event we do not have a will, the court or others will decide for us, often ignoring our important preferences. Deciding not to write a will suggests a lack of civic responsibility and a lost opportunity to demonstrate our love to those we leave behind.

Every person has the legal right to make a will. Details of your will include naming an executor, deciding who will serve as guardians of minor children and providing guidelines concerning how they will be raised, determining the use of accumulated wealth, and expressing gratitude for all of life's blessings by giving to the charity or charities of your choice. Life involves a string of choices, and the most important choices we make involve the use and disposition of what we have. This is called stewardship, the management of our resources.

How we live our lives often becomes a statement of our faith. Our last act—our will—serves as a final testimony of our faith journey in life. We exercise a spiritual privilege when we plan and write a will.

To assist you in your estate planning, you may want to contact your attorney or, perhaps, you would like to talk to me as the director of Gift Planning for the Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls, Minnesota. I can provide basic information about wills and bequests, as well as relate various ways others have included the Franciscan Sisters in their estate planning. I can be reached at 320-632-0699.

Volunteer Opportunities

Poster Placer— Have fun talking to business owners and employees who want to display our posters for various events (American Red Cross Blood Drive, St. Francis Music Center and fundraisers). This is a great way to promote the mission and ministry of the Franciscan Sisters!

Beautician— Enjoy the company and blessings of sisters who find it difficult to leave the convent for hair appointments and perms. No license required.

Special Events— Occasional “on call” one-of-a-kind opportunities that may be a last-minute appeal for help or a fun event, which often includes great food. (Next event: Harvest Dinner, November 3.)

Gardener— Cultivate, learn and nurture the many outdoor spaces, including flower beds, vegetable gardens and orchards.

Volunteer at large— The anytime, anywhere person who likes diversity.

Red Cross Blood Drive— Welcome blood donors, provide simple clerical assistance, serve snacks. (Next blood drive: October 31 – November 1.)

Gift Shop Clerk— Greet and assist customers shopping at the Franciscan Gift Shop. Experience using a credit card machine helpful, but we will train.

Contact: Kathy Whittington, volunteer coordinator, at 320-632-0691.

Fair Trade: helping to build an economy for everyone

Sister Janice Welle

We Franciscan Sisters support artisans and farmers around the world by promoting Fair Trade coffee and chocolate. Disadvantaged producers earn a fair price for their labor, get access to credit and training, and develop mutually beneficial, long-term relationships with organizations dedicated to the principles of human dignity and economic justice.



This label represents TransFair USA based in Oakland, Calif., one of 20 members of Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International (FLO). TransFair tracks and audits transactions between U.S. companies offering Fair Trade Certified products and

the international suppliers from whom they source, to guarantee that the farmers and farm workers are paid a fair, above-market price. TransFair monitors the use of the label while FLO conducts annual farm inspections, ensuring that Fair Trade revenue is spent according to strict socioeconomic, development criteria.

The Fair Trade coffee, known on campus as Franciscan Roast, is served in our dining room. Both the coffee and chocolate are for sale in our Franciscan Gift Shop, which is open **Mondays – Fridays from noon to 5 p.m.** To order coffee and/or chocolate see www.fslf.org or call 320-632-0601.



Sisters Ruth Nistler, Olga Neft and Blase Kulzer at the 2011 Animal Blessing ceremony

Celebrate the Feast of Saint Francis

Transitus

Wednesday, October 3 (7 p.m.)

Sacred Heart Chapel, St. Francis Convent

“Transitus” is a word that simply means the passing of someone from one condition to another. In this case it refers to the commemorative passage of Francis of Assisi from this life to the next. Transitus is a ritual service that recalls the events surrounding the death of Francis and the farewell message he gave to his followers. We invite everyone, not just Franciscans, to come and celebrate this event with us.

Blessing of Animals

Sunday, October 7 (1:15 p.m.)

St. Francis Convent (outdoor event)

The Franciscan Sisters and the Episcopal Church of Our Saviour in Little Falls invite all animal lovers and their pets for a service to be held on the lawn near the west parking lot of St. Francis Convent. All four-legged, furry or feathered friends are welcome! This special blessing is in honor of the Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi, patron of animals and of all creation.

Other Upcoming Events

October 7 – Donor Day, Little Falls

October 21 – Donor Day, Twin Cities

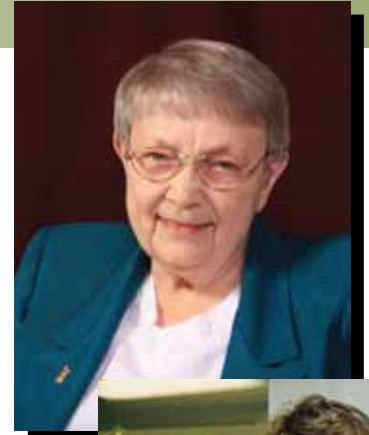
November 3 – Harvest Dinner, 4:30-7 pm

In loving memory

Sister Mary Cordelia Bloch, 84, died July 25, 2012 at St. Francis Convent, Little Falls. Born November 2, 1927, in Albany, she was third oldest child of the late Henry and Margaret (Keppers) Bloch. She was accepted as a Franciscan Sister of Little Falls, Minnesota, on August 12, 1947. She made her first profession of vows on August 12, 1949, and final vows on August 12, 1952.

Sister Cordelia was most happy when she could help someone who was in real need. She said, "People who are poor know how to wait. They wait for a check. They wait for help. It's something we all can learn here in America: to learn to wait." She enjoyed meeting people and listening to their stories. She was a very approachable person who had a ready smile and loved to have a good time. She was an excellent caregiver to infants as well as elderly people. In her spare time she enjoyed bird and squirrel watching and hastened to see that they had something to eat. Her favorite season was spring when all of creation comes alive with new life. Of all the culinary talents she had and put to good use, she enjoyed baking bread the most.

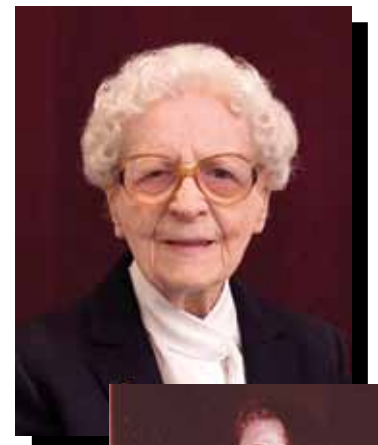
She ministered as a laundress, cook, housekeeper, child welfare worker, hospitality employee, food service supervisor, baker, home health care giver and manager of Clothes Review. She served in Moorhead, Richmond, Little Falls, St. Cloud, Prior Lake, Duluth, Onamia, Sauk Rapids, St. Paul and Alexandria; Cudahy and Milwaukee, Wis.; Prestonsburg and David, Ky; and Sonoma, Calif.



Sister Mary Justina Bieganek, 100, died July 20, 2012, at St. Francis Convent, Little Falls. She was born on January 16, 1912, in New York City, orphaned at three weeks and placed in the New York Foundling Home. In 1913, little Edith Peterson rode one of the early Orphan Trains to Holdingford, to join the family of John and Mary Bieganek. When Mary died, their son and his wife, Joseph and Rose (Deering) Bieganek, took her into their home. She was accepted as a Franciscan Sister of Little Falls, Minnesota, on August 12, 1929. She made first profession of vows on August 12, 1931, and final vows on August 10, 1934.

She had a very strong love for her family and for her religious community. This was evident in her solicitude for her family and from the strong spirit of sharing her talents. She showed adaptability by frequently moving from mission to mission as directed by her superiors and accepting any ministry she was given. A diocesan priest who assisted the bishop attested to that when he said, "Sister Justina, every place we go, you are there!" She was once told, "She who loves work is always on vacation." Since work was always her joy, she figured she was on vacation most of her life. Celebrating her 60th anniversary, she said, "Deepest gratitude fills my heart when I think of God's great goodness to me and the countless persons whose lives have touched mine and helped me to grow in Christ's love."

Sister Justina attended St. Paul Teacher's College, St. Paul; St. John's University, Collegeville, and Mount St. Scholastica, Atchison, Kans., where she earned various certificates. She ministered as an office clerk, religion teacher, parish worker/visitor, pastoral care worker, organist and secretary. She served in St. Cloud, Foley, Elk River, Osakis, Browns Valley, Royalton, Flensburg and Lastrup. When she returned to Little Falls, she worked in the Music Center until the last year of her life.



Sister Mary Maristell Schanen, 93, died July 6, 2012, at St. Francis Convent, Little Falls, Minn. Born February 19, 1919, in Cohasset, she was the first of six children of the late William and Cecelia (Kearney) Schanen. She was accepted as a Franciscan Sister of Little Falls, Minnesota, on August 12, 1948. She made her first profession of vows on August 12, 1950, and final vows on August 12, 1953.

Sister Maristell lived her life with an intensity of appreciation for the good, the true and the beautiful. She had a deep understanding and gratitude for all the experiences into which she was led by Divine Providence in her life's journey. She held herself to the high ideals that she gathered from her parents, her faith and her religious community. She made the spirit of Saint Francis her very own by being, as Francis directed his followers, "To be Mothers of the Lord by bearing the Word in your hearts and giving birth to Him in the world." She had a singular trust in the mystery of the Indwelling Trinity and work of the Spirit acting in and through everything that exists. She knew with all her heart that, "He Who has begun a good work in you will carry it onto completion." (St. Paul's letter to Philippians)

Sister Maristell received a bachelor's degree from the College of St. Teresa, Winona, and a master's degree and a doctorate from St. Mary's College, Notre Dame, Ind. She also studied at St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure, NY, and the School of Applied Theology, Berkeley, Calif.

Sister Maristell ministered throughout her life in education, both formally as a teacher in high schools, college and religious education and informally in Franciscan renewal and as an administrative assistant with Catholic Relief Services, the East African Province of the Spiritan Fathers and Brothers, and the Diocese of Zanzibar. She served in Little Falls, White Bear Lake, Duluth, Flensburg and Belle Prairie; New York City, NY; Canon City, Colo.; Yemen Arab Republic; and Tanzania.



Sister Eileen (Mary Evelyn) Theis, 84, died May 29, 2012, at St. Franciscan Convent, Little Falls. Born April 11, 1928, in Buckman, she was the oldest of 13 children of John and Loretta (Broschofsky) Theis. She was accepted as a Franciscan Sister of Little Falls, Minnesota, on August 12, 1947. She made her first profession of vows on August 12, 1949, and final vows on August 12, 1952.

Sister Eileen was eager to learn and applied her learning dutifully. She had a deep respect for people and was a devoted nurse. She loved her work in health care and felt both challenged and rewarded educating nurses for over 30 years. She tried to impress on them the importance of the healing touch of the nurses' hands and to know that caring for a patient is not only a job, it is an art.

Sister Eileen became a registered nurse at St. Francis School of Nursing, Breckenridge; earned a bachelor's of science degree in nursing from Marquette University College of Nursing, Milwaukee, Wis.; a master's degree in health care education from St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud, and did further study at Creighton University, Omaha, Nebr., to become an instructor in natural family planning.

She ministered as a staff nurse, head nurse, supervisor, director of nursing service, in-service coordinator, clinical instructor, parish minister, coordinator of hospice volunteer program, home health and nursing instructor. She served in Sauk Centre, St. Cloud and Little Falls; Dodgeville, South Milwaukee, Madison, Marshfield and LaCrosse, Wis.; Prestonsburg, Ky.; Chimayo, N. Mex.; Pendleton, Oreg.; Tucson, Ariz.; Sun Valley and Van Nuys, Calif.



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Pounds and pounds, bushels and bushels!

The Franciscan Sisters have had a continuous garden for 120 years and with it a long tradition of providing for themselves from the gifts that God provides. Once the founding sisters became established in Little Falls and began responding to the needs of the poor, they soon had orphans and elders to feed along with patients at St. Gabriel's Hospital and the new sisters joining the community. In the early days, the sisters did their own milking (including pasteurization) and raised and butchered beef cows, pigs and chickens. They grazed their cows on pastureland on the west side of Little Falls. Sisters and some locals still remember cattle being herded through the town's main streets.

Sister Ruth Lentner keeps the tradition alive today, overseeing the huge garden and the orchard, which she inherited from Sister Leonarda Schmitt when she died in 2000. To give an idea of just how plentiful the harvest can be, Sister Ruth reports that in 2010 she and her team of dedicated volunteers harvested 1126 lbs. cucumbers, 1039 lbs. tomatoes, 582 lbs. summer squash, 1144 lbs. winter squash, 1231 lbs. watermelon and 764 lbs. cantaloupe. Much of the yield is frozen or processed in other ways for use throughout the year. Sister Ruth makes pickles and apple and tomato juice by the gallon. Thanks to Sister Joel Bieniek, former

dietician, the sisters enjoy homemade jelly and jam—strawberry rhubarb, grape, plum, choke cherry and ground cherry—all year long. Strawberries are picked elsewhere, but the rest of the fruit grows on the campus. Over the years, raspberries and blueberries have been added, but the rhubarb patch has endured for over 100 years, along with the community itself.



Sister Ruth Lentner nurtures the motherhouse gardens.