

Our Journey

living the Gospel

CELEBRATING 125 YEARS
FOUNDED 1891



*Lillian Krall of
2011*



FRANCISCAN SISTERS
OF LITTLE FALLS, MINNESOTA

Summer 2016 • Vol. 34 No. 3

Two sisters profess final vows

Deanna V. Boone

Sisters Maria Isabel (Isa) Berrones Morales and Aurora Catalina Tovar Rodriguez took final vows as Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls, Minnesota, on Friday, May 27, during a celebration Mass at St. Francis Convent.

Both women came to know the Franciscan Sisters and their work through sisters' mission in San Rafael, Mexico. Sister Pat Forster, who ministers there, said, "These two beautiful Mexican women are committed deeply to our loving God. They are committed to the poor and to being and doing what others are not free to be and do."

"They bring an authentic Franciscan spirit, a joy, maturity and the wisdom needed to contemplate anew their daily call and our call in a multi-cultural, global world," Sister Pat added.

Sister Isa grew up in Gomez Farias, Tamaulipas, Mexico. "I chose to be a Franciscan Sister of Little Falls because of an attraction to the charism of Saint Francis of Assisi," she said. "I like the form of life of the sisters and their commitment to living the Gospel, serving the poor and working for peace, justice and ecology."

As a volunteer at Catholic Charities, Sister Isa has the opportunity to serve people with different kinds of needs and work with other people who are very committed to serve the most vulnerable of our society. With a degree in social work and human development, she said, "My gifts are to serve the people in the best way I can. It's a challenge to help people from another culture manage life in a new place and in a new way. Being a Franciscan Sister and having a degree are privileges, but privileges to serve. As a social worker I am committed to the promotion of the human person, their well-being and their full development. As a Franciscan Sister I have the mission to live the Gospel, serving Christ in the poor, the favorite of the Kingdom of God."

Sister Aurora, from the desert farming community of Mezquite in Nuevo Leon, said, "When I accompanied the sisters visiting the families in different villages, I observed their work and commitment to the most needy. They freely shared God's love, like Saint Francis of Assisi."

She added, "Saint Francis taught not just about evangelization but about people's well-being. He established relationships with the people through his words and actions." Now, as a volunteer with the Diocese of St. Cloud, she builds relationships with the Latino people in Cold Spring, Long Prairie, Melrose, Morris, Pelican Rapids and Rockville. With a degree in educational psychology, "I teach them how to care for themselves as well as grow in their spiritual life. I teach them but I learn much more from them about faith and relationships."

Sisters Isa and Aurora, excited and delighted, they agreed, "Our hearts are full of love and gratitude."



Sister Aurora Tovar, Community Minister Sister Bea Eichten, and Sister Isa Berrones

Our Journey

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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: Artwork by Sister Lillian Kroll.

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.

© June 2016
Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls,
Minnesota

Dear Friends,

As the celebration of the 125th anniversary of our congregation continues, the many meanings of “anniversary” remind us of our journey during this special year. One meaning is celebration, jubilation, festivity, merrymaking—in other words, having a good time celebrating the honoree. Others focus on honoring, recognizing, memorializing the honoree, which we are certainly doing as a congregation as we recall the events and persons who have brought us to where we are today in 2016.

One meaning for anniversary that’s intriguing is “keeping,” as in caring for, observing, keeping custody of, preserving, protecting and safekeeping. What is it that we Franciscan Sisters want to keep? Is it things, buildings, artifacts? No. In our history, we have left many things behind when God’s call and the needs of the time so indicated. Often, we were an example of Saint Francis’s words, “Start by doing what’s necessary; then do what’s possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible.” We might add “and then move on when others can carry on the work.”

Ours is not a history that points out only the positive and tucks away those times of failure and struggle. Rather, it is the times when we have known struggle that we have given witness to our faith and the virtues and strengths of our community. Perhaps this illustrates another quote by Saint Francis: “If God can work through me, [God] can work through anyone.” God has worked through us; for that we are grateful!

What is it we want to protect and preserve, to hold for safekeeping? If we were to poll our sisters, associates and friends, we would probably hear words like prayer, love, peace, simplicity, attention to the little ones and those in need, laughter and hospitality. May we keep these values alive and safe in our hearts and our communal life!

You’ll see a sampling of how we live out these values as we “keep” our anniversary. The stories and articles make me think of Saint Teresa of Calcutta’s words, “We cannot all do great things, but we can do small things with great love.” May the love we share and the love you share with others circle our world—keeping us all close in the arms of our loving God.

Peace and love,

Sister Beatrice Eichten Sister Rose Margaret Schneider
Sister Susan Knutson Sister Grace Skewira



The 125th anniversary of the Franciscan Sisters was recognized at the three performances of *Late Nite Catechism* at the Paramount Theatre in St. Cloud and included a “collection” that raised over \$3,300 to benefit Franciscan ministries. From left: Sisters Carol Schmit, Karen Niedzielski, Jan Kilian, actress Kimberly Richards, Pat Schlauderaff, and Sisters Michelle L’Allier and Rose Mae Rausch.

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 federal income tax deduction, Franciscan Sister 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.

Jubilarians

2016

This issue of *Our Journey* honors Franciscan Sisters celebrating their 50th, 60th and 75th jubilees. These 11 sisters represent 670 years of vowed membership and decades of service and ministry to God's people. In light of the 125th anniversary of the Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls, Minnesota, they were asked to reflect on their call to religious life and commitment to gospel living. Enjoy their thoughtful responses!

Sister Mary Pat Burger



I am most grateful for God's continuous presence throughout my life. I thank You, God, for the people and happenings that have comforted, cajoled and challenged me. Each day presents new revelations of You—whether it be in nature, people or happenings. I look forward to your deepening my ability to claim and then proclaim your goodness, your love and your presence in my life.

Sister Caroline Stoltz



As I walk gently, with openness and gratitude for the gift of God's presence, nourished by discernment and contemplation, I respond to the call to Gospel living with hope and trust, acknowledging an unknown future. Amidst the brokenness and violence in our world, I strive for and pray for peace, justice, healing, mercy and compassion for our global family and all of creation.

Sister Noreen Bentfield



The Franciscan call is to follow the Gospel. In our Constitutions we flesh this out, "We perceive our call particularly in hearing the needs of our brothers and sisters in the human community and attending to them." My experience has been that to really "hear" the needs of others we need to listen with our ears, eyes, our whole being and especially our hearts.

Sister Rita Kraemer

My call to religious life brings back times of “wondering” . . . then knowing and wanting to respond to “that voice within.” In striving to live the message of the Gospel, trust in God’s Providence has become a daily prayer and resolve to all that occurs in my life. My varied ministries have given me, not only opportunities to serve, but to trust, learn, teach and witness to a manner of serving the needs of others that fosters quality, respect and regard, particularly, for the elderly.



Sister Karen Niedzielski

In the spirit of Saints Francis and Clare, I follow Jesus who has asked his followers to love one another. This love I believe is boundless, reaching out to all my brothers and sisters in creation—including those who do not return my love.



Sister Maurita Niedzieski

I am grateful for the many years I have experienced God’s love for me and for all people and all creation. All that we are and all that we have is pure gift from our loving God. My response to God’s extravagant love is to be compassionate to all in my words, choices and actions.



Sister Kay Watts

These 60 years of religious life have flown by so fast. This has been a very good life for me in getting to know our sisters, a time for prayer and the special gatherings of all of us together. I look back in gratitude for all that has been. “Thank you, God, for all you have done in my life.”



Sister Beverly Weidner

Reflecting on the call to religious life and Gospel living, I recall Bishop Moreau's "What Motley Crew (ones offering guidance and sharing wisdom) Walks with You?" Well, I've been walking the road for 79 years and the motley crew walking with me at different times has included family, sisters, kids (especially three), Native Americans, African Americans, homeless people, some dogs, a few goats, trees, lakes and so many more, continually challenging me to live the Gospel.



Sister Janice Welle



60th

My call to religious life came in stages. First, the admiration of a sister catechism teacher when I was a fifth grader. The second stage was an inner attraction to join the Franciscans my senior year. Commitment to gospel living came later as my faith developed through reading, prayer, meditation, classes and discussion.

Sister Patrice Kiefer



75th

Life for all of us is a journey. My journey has included a call to walk it as a Franciscan Sister. As I've journeyed, I have tried to respond to God's call for service to others as I live out my commitment to gospel living.

Sister Mary Amy Schreiner



75th

I give thanks for the marvelous way in which God has led me via responding to the Holy Spirit through faith-filled parents, wise teachers and loving Franciscan Sisters to walk with throughout these grace-filled years. I remember Matthew 5:3, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."



St. Francis Campus, Little Falls
Wednesday, Aug. 3, 2016 4-8 pm

Exhibits • Live Music • Family activities

For more information: www.fslf.org/pages/GreenFair



Consecrated Life: Poverty

This is the third article in a series on the Franciscan values by Sister Elise Saggau



In the last two articles in this series on the four fundamental qualities that characterize the Third Order Regular way of life, we considered first minority and then conversion of life. This time we turn our attention to *poverty*. Poverty, as a spiritual value, is rooted in our understanding that God is “All Good,” and that we depend absolutely on this overflowing source of goodness and being. Of and by ourselves, we are empty and powerless. Of and by ourselves, we are a space that God longs to fill.

Poverty is so often thought of primarily as “not having stuff.” While Francis certainly believed that one should not have a lot of stuff, this is not generally what he meant when he admonished his followers to be “poor.” Francis lived in amazement and wonder over the fact that God, in absolute freedom, created us. Francis was profoundly aware that we do not exist necessarily, but only by the goodness and intention of a loving Creator. Not only have we not created ourselves, but we do not stay in existence from day to day without the positive intention and loving decision of our Creator. Thus, God has us always in mind, always in sight, always in “will.” God always wants us; God always loves us. If this were not so, we would cease to exist.

Furthermore, our ability to perform acts of goodness is entirely dependent on the Spirit of God at work in us. Thus it follows that any good we perform, any good achievements we accomplish must be attributed to the Spirit of God. The talents we have, the energy we employ, the visions we enjoy, the loving relationships we engage in, the acts of charity and justice we perform DO NOT BELONG TO US! If we forget this and want to take credit for our own goodness, our own positive accomplishments, and lay claim to them, this is spiritually self-destructive. It denies our authentic reality and substitutes a “false self.” All genuine religious traditions, Christian and non-Christian, understand this. Thomas Merton says:

The state of insight which is final integration implies an openness, an “emptiness,” a “poverty” similar to those described in such detail not only by the Rhenish mystics, by St. John of the Cross, by the early Franciscans, but also by the Sufis, the early Taoist masters and Zen Buddhists. Final integration implies the void, poverty and nonaction which leave one entirely docile to the ‘Spirit’ and hence a potential instrument of unusual creativity. (Merton in Walter Conn, *Conversion* [Alba House, 1978] pp. 268-9.)

Whenever we choose our self over God, whenever we forget who we are, where we came from and where we are going, we put ourselves into a false position and vitiate our activities and our relationships. If all good is from God and if we can make no claims for the good we do and the beneficial results we achieve, we understand ourselves to be a kind of emptiness expecting to be filled and amazed when we are filled.

We are not here for ourselves. Our gifts and talents have not been given for ourselves. If we amass material riches without reference to the needs of our brothers and sisters, we have not understood who we are and why we are here. If we do not understand that we must serve the needs of our brothers and sisters, we have grossly mistaken our reason for being. Francis bids us to have only one desire—that the Spirit of God should be at work in us. When we have this desire, when we have this Spirit, we are meek and humble of heart. We are poor. We are instruments of God’s work in the world, as we are meant to be.

Far From Home

Associate Jeff Odendahl

Catholic Social Teaching reminds us of our duty to give a generous welcome to those who come to us seeking relief from persecution. From their earliest days the Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls reached out to persons in need, serving not only orphans, the sick and the elderly, but refugees as well. During the late 1940s, World War II had ended, but many people in Eastern Europe were homeless. Refugees began coming to the United States, and the Franciscan Sisters were among their first sponsors, receiving folks being resettled from Germany, Poland, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Ukraine.

Many of these people lived and worked in Little Falls for a while, then moved on. Others did not. One of the happier stories is that of Betty and Joseph Pietrzykowski, who arrived in 1949. Betty and her German family were in a camp for displaced persons when she met Joseph, a Pole who had escaped from the Russians. When they first came to Little Falls, Betty spoke only German, and felt terribly lonely. She was befriended by the sisters, and Sister Rachel Zenzen in particular. Both Betty and Joseph found work in the local community, with Betty eventually working many years at St. Gabriel's Hospital.

By the mid-1970s, the Viet Nam War had wound down, but the horror in Southeast Asia wasn't over. Pol Pot had gained control in Cambodia, and about one-fourth of that country's population had been murdered. Many others were destitute, and refugees were still flocking to neighboring Thailand. Sisters Grace Skwira and Joan Gerads were two Franciscan Sisters who reported for duty in the refugee camps there. Sister Grace remembers the people arriving in the camp—they were starving, sick and traumatized.

During her orientation, the first group of refugees



Sister Grace Skwira in 1980, working with refugees in Chonburi Refugee Camp, Phanatnikom, Thailand.

arrived. The camp was still being set up, and housing and other facilities weren't yet available. Still, a young woman was giving birth, and Sister Grace was there to assist her. This was the beginning of her work in maternal health and pre-natal screening, but much of what she witnessed was deeply disturbing. People spoke of living on watered-down rice, often mixed with gravel. One man, a doctor, had been sent from the city to the countryside and forced to pull a plow like a beast of burden. Refugees drew pictures describing their experiences—one was of a woman tied to a tree while soldiers threw her child in the air and shot it.

While Sister Grace was aiding war-time refugees in Thailand, another group of refugees made its way to Little Falls. Sister Anita Jennissen had been working with Cuban refugees at Camp McCoy in Wisconsin. Through Sister Anita, Clemente Ramirez, his wife, and three others came to live and work at St. Francis Convent in 1980. Like others who have come to live with the sisters, they were quickly enveloped in the life of the Convent. Sister Mary Christine Wiener began English lessons immediately. Jobs and/or

*Immaculate Conception
Catechetical School established
in Osakis.*

1951

*St. Andrew Catechetical School in Elk
River becomes an elementary school.*

*St. Francis Nursing Home
established in Breckenridge.*

1952

*Sisters begin management of
Memorial Hospital of Lafayette
County, Darlington, Wisconsin.*

*Holy Spirit Elementary School
established in St. Cloud.*

1952

1953

school were lined up. While most of these folks moved on, Clemente continued to work at St. Francis Convent until his retirement in 1995.

The 1980s was a particularly turbulent era for several Central American countries. The era saw refugees from El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Colombia, Honduras, Liberia and Ethiopia seek assistance from the sisters. No one was turned away. During a brutal civil war in El Salvador, young men, in particular, had little choice—pick a side, the army or the rebels—and participate in the killing, or be killed yourself. Many chose to leave, making the perilous trip north. One who made this journey, Tomas Ochoa, found a supporting community in the sisters and Little Falls. Eventually, he became a U. S. citizen, and continues to work at St. Francis Convent.

An era of violence struck Somalia and much of eastern Africa in the 1990s. Shortly after, some of the many displaced people from that area began arriving in central Minnesota. Returning from over 15 years in Africa, Sister Tonie Rausch was seeking that same exuberant spirit she had witnessed in her many years serving abroad. She and Brianda Cediel founded Hands Across the World, a nonprofit school teaching English as a second language to refugees and immigrants. The program became a haven for Somalian and other refugees, a place to improve language skills, but also a place to hone basic living skills and learn greater self-sufficiency. Of this experience, Sister Tonie says, “This is where I continue to work for justice and peace, offering opportunities for marginalized to integrate in American culture and become active citizens.”

Despite the passage of time, today we face a global refugee crisis. More than 60 million people are displaced from their homes, more than at any time since World War II. Some 20 million of the displaced are refugees. Refugee resettlement is a last resort, only considered for the most vulnerable refugees who cannot safely return home. Refugees resettled in the



Tomas Ochoa and Sister Grace Skwira. In 1989 Tomas came to Little Falls from El Salvador as a refugee. The sisters provided housing, a job at St. Francis Convent and help with acclimating to a new culture. With assistance from Sister Grace, Sister Adela Gross and others, he became a U.S. citizen in 2008.

United States successfully support their families, pay taxes and contribute to their new communities. They work in industries ranging from hospitality, food service, teaching, engineering, nursing and medicine, and many start their own businesses.

What is next for our Franciscan Sisters? The sisters may be a smaller group now, but they are still eager to stand with and support people struggling to live so far from home. The words heard from several of the sisters are, “Let’s help now, while we still can.”

This article first appeared in the *Morrison County Record* as part of a series on the history of the Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls, Minnesota. Reprinted with permission.

Sacred Heart Catechetical School in Flensburg becomes an elementary school.

1953

Our Lady of Victory Catechetical School in Fergus Falls becomes an elementary school.

1956

Sisters begin management of Community Mercy Hospital in Onamia.

1956

St. Mary’s Elementary School established in Alexandria.

1957

Juniorate established in House of Studies, St. Paul.

1957

Expanding ministries, expanding education

*Sister Carol Schmit**

As the Franciscan Community began to grow, education for women was never in doubt. To understand the Franciscan Sisters' priority on education, it may be helpful to highlight some key historical markers. Minnesota became a state in 1858. The population was 9,000, which didn't include the vast number of Native Americans who were not part of the census. Women received the right to vote in 1920. The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), meant to give women equal rights with men, was passed in 1923, but to this day never ratified by the required 38 states.

As the sisters considered requests to establish hospitals, homes for the aged and schools, education of the sisters was key. Sisters were sent far and wide for further education and training.

Sister Mary Joseph White went to Denver to study pharmacy; Sister Baptista Blais accompanied her to study dietetics. Sister Mary Michael McClaney was sent to Creighton Memorial Hospital in Omaha to prepare for surgical nursing. Sister Mary Angela Michaud, already a teacher, was sent to Lafayette, Ind., for a specialized course in teacher training, as did Sisters Mary Bernardine Bergen and Gabriel Keenan in Columbus, Neb. From the 1890s through the first decade of the 20th century, sisters were serving as administrators of hospitals, nursing schools, nursing homes and an orphanage. Attendance at national meetings of hospital administrators included men and religious sisters!

As the ministries required more professional preparation, the sisters saw the need for a solid educational background for new members coming to



A 1955 performance of the operetta, "The Slip of a Slipper," featured Carol Schmit, Adeline Kroll, Carol Cruse, Anne Coleman, Doreen Eveslage and Myrna Ohmann. Anne Coleman and Myrna Ohmann entered the community, but are no longer members. Carol Schmit and Ade Kroll have been Franciscan Sisters for 58 years.

the convent from small towns and rural areas where there was often little or no opportunity for a high school education. In 1922 a high school department was started for sisters who had no secondary education.

What was to become St. Francis High School began (without accreditation) in a corner room of the convent building. Sister Agatha Zaczkowski, who had completed two years of high school at Melrose when she entered the community in 1916, became one of a little group that hoped to obtain a diploma. Sister Agatha described the new school, "There were no blackboards or desks. The room was furnished with a table and a few chairs, slates and pencils, a dictionary, a few textbooks and a globe. The student sisters wrote out their essays on the backs of letters from advertising companies. For their algebra assignments, they slit open used envelopes and wrote on the inside. The science laboratory consisted of a small homemade tray table equipped with an alcohol lamp, a test tube

Trinity Memorial Hospital established in Cudahy, Wisconsin.

1958

Sacred Heart Retreat house opened in Moorhead.

St. James Nursing Home established in Perham.

1958

1960

St. Raphael Hospital in Parkers Prairie closed.

Holy Cross Elementary School established in Onamia.

1960

1960

and small dish and spoon and a few simple chemicals.”

Four sisters earned their high school diplomas after passing their tests which they took at the local public high school, including exams on subjects for which they had no classwork.

By 1926 St. Francis High School was officially established, meeting the state requirement of having at least four teachers. The three women on the faculty were all graduates of the College of St. Teresa, Winona, Minn. Sister Antonio Kane was principal and also taught history, social science, English III and IV. Sister Mary Catherine Reis taught English I and II, French, biology and chorus; Reverend Henry Hirsch conducted the classes in religion and Latin. Lay teacher Mary Viola Allen taught algebra, geometry, general science, chemistry and physical education. During that first year Mary Viola Allen entered the Franciscan Community and became Sister Mary Lorraine and later served as principal of the school for 17 years.

As with the hospital and the orphanage, the high school soon needed a building of its own. We sisters have often asked, “Where did the vision come from?” The 1929 building, home to the new St. Francis High School, included housing for 100 boarding students, a state-of-the-art swimming pool, gymnasium, music

studios and classrooms for all the required high school subjects.

While the majority of students were boarders— young 13- and 14-years-olds away from home for the first time—a significant number each year lived in Little Falls and neighboring towns. These were dubbed “day hops.” The school offered a full-scale curriculum, including music, even operettas with orchestra, and the arts.

By the 1970s, interest in Catholic boarding schools had waned. The school graduated its last class in 1977. A total of 2,358 young women graduated— well prepared to offer their families, parishes and cities throughout the United States and abroad values of leadership, community and social justice.

*Sister Carol Schmit graduated from St. Francis High School in 1956 and returned in 1963 to teach there until its closing.

This article first appeared in the *Morrison County Record* as part of a series of articles on the history of the Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls, Minnesota. Portions of the text are taken from *In the Shadow of His Wings* (1977) by Sister Assumpta Ahles and *The Foundation and Years of Expansion* (1990) by Sister Beata Lorsung.



Home economics was part of a rigorous curriculum. Today, this classroom, including the original cabinetry, is part of St. Francis Health and Recreation Center.

St. Agnes Elementary School established in Osakis.

1960

St. Clare Junior College established in Little Falls.

1961

Our Lady of Lourdes Elementary School established in Little Falls.

1961

Congregation purchases property on Mississippi River near Rice (“Umbria”).

Tertiaship Renewal Programs begin in Moorhead.

Dry bones and acts of mercy

Associate Cleta Gingerich*

The theme of mercy has become a powerful connection in my experience in Jos, Nigeria, where dry bones come alive with God's gift of mercy.

Through prayer I feel connected with our Franciscan Sisters and Associates in a powerful way as a source of strength beyond description. It is strength through struggle and strength through weakness. Learning to accept my weakness is humbling, learning to accept God's mercy, a gift. Mercy comes in differing forms, like the correspondence from the sisters and associates' office. It is a gift to restore my soul which wasn't expected or deserved. Thank you for those thoughtful and encouraging gifts of mercy!

In a Lenten meditation, Pope Francis exclaims, "Let us be renewed by God's mercy, let us be loved by Jesus, let us enable the power of his love to transform our lives, too, and let us become agents of this mercy, channels through which God can water the earth, protect all creation and make justice and peace flourish." In the book of Ezekiel, Chapter 37, we can read the story of the dry bones. God's mercy can make even the driest land become a garden, can restore life to dry bones.

Ezekiel's message is especially touching and pertinent for me in Nigeria—helping me see beauty in life around me, the flowering trees, the smiles, the determination to sell a pack of gum on the busy streets to earn one naira (Nigerian currency). Planting a barren stick in the soil and watching it sprout when the rain comes tomorrow gives me hope. I witness sisters and daughters selling carrots and cabbages, laughing with napping babies on their backs. Then I see the smile of my friend Rifkatu setting up her shack where she calls, "Food's ready. Right here!" She does this on unclaimed land which the city tried to



Margaret and Monica baking bread in a traditional oven they made out of a barrel; a wood fire provides heat from underneath.

chase her off. But Rifkatu stood up saying, "NO! I am a widow, I must earn money to feed my children!" She feeds her family by selling semolina and "draw soup" which is a Nigerian okra or pumpkin seed soup. Rifkatu brings in people with her vibrant smile.

Margaret heads up one of the NGO projects called Homemakers, which empowers rural women who fled Boko Haram and are living in Jos. She helps them find a skill like bread baking or soap making which enables them to buy food, pay school fees and get medical care.

Congregation sells the "Old Farm" near Flensburg.

1961

Bethany Home established in Onamia.

1962

Congregation establishes a mission in Yunguyo, Peru.

1962

A Home Visiting Program begun in Little Falls.

1962

70,000 seedlings (white pine, Norway pine, cedar, and blue spruce) planted on south Motherhouse campus.

1963

She also works with drug-addicted young adults with whom she has gained trust and respect. They know she cares for them. They meet daily for a devotional and a time of sharing their struggles and questions about life. She provides them with a listening ear and counsel, helping them think about their future and giving them a reason to live with hope, even though they feel abandoned by their families and society. "Mommy Margaret," as they affectionately call her, loves them without judgment and offers them mercy. She teaches them practical

skills for making jewelry, baking bread and making soap in addition to developing skills of weaving and sewing wallets, shopping bags and rugs from recycled plastic bags. The goal is to help them become self-sustaining and to live healthy lives. They are learning to value life and have hope for the future. Margaret is a woman of great faith who is teaching me so much about living with hope!

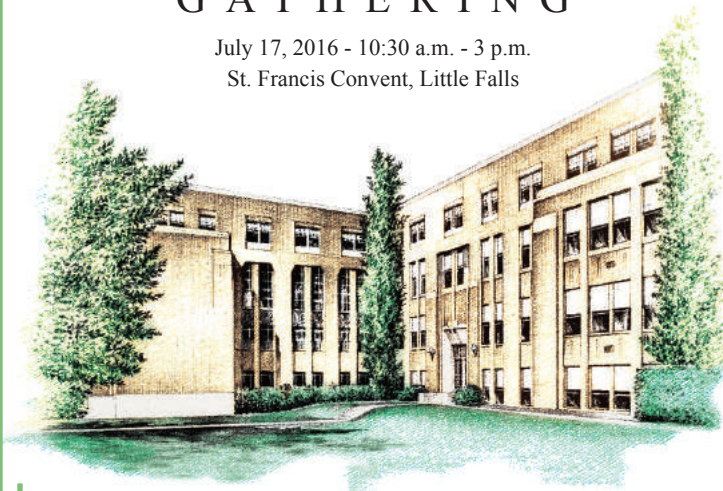
This is dry land becoming a garden. These are dry bones restored to life. These are acts of mercy.

*Associate Cleta Gingerich (and her husband Orv) volunteers in Jos, Nigeria, with the relief organization of the Mennonite Church working across ethnic and religious boundaries to support local NGOs involved in community development and peace building

St. Francis High School

GATHERING

July 17, 2016 - 10:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.
St. Francis Convent, Little Falls



The Franciscan Sisters invite former students, staff, and faculty to gather on Sunday, July 17, 2016, for Mass and lunch.

This is a great opportunity to enjoy one another's company, to share memories, and to help celebrate the 125th anniversary of the founding of the Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls.

Please send your name, address, year of graduation and phone number, together with your registration fee, by July 1 to:

Mary Ellen Imdieke
3395 125 Ave. NE
Blaine MN 55449-6572

Phone: 763-785-0295
E-mail: sfhs.reunion@outlook.com

Registration fee: \$20 per person. Checks payable to Franciscan Sisters. Due by July 1. (Late fee \$25)

Tanquist Memorial Home established in Alexandria.

1963

Sisters begin using "Peoples Mass Book" with Mass in English.

1964

St. Francis Nursing School in Breckenridge closed.

1964

Congregation receives "Decree of Praise" from Rome, giving it full Pontifical Status.

1965

High Mass at the Motherhouse sung in English for first time.

1965

URock, K & C Café provides music opportunity for teens

Rob Clemons, coordinator of URock Against Violence

Over a decade ago, the teachers from St. Francis Music Center encouraged some of their students to play on stage at the Music Center's first Peace Concert. As the event evolved into the annual Green Fair Folk Festival, the Music Center's summer programming developed into a structured day camp where teens could meet other teens, put together a band, and play the music they loved in a safe, positive and family-friendly environment. Led by guitar teacher Greg Langlois, the summer "rock camp" included youth performances at the Green Fair. Thanks to a generous grant from Catholic Health Initiatives, the summer camp has become the URock Against Violence program, which offers high-quality music instruction and band coaching to teens year-round.

URock Against Violence has two main goals. The first is directly related to music—the program exists to help kids develop their music skills and offers opportunities for kids to go from little or no musical background to being able to perform in a band, in front of an audience. For kids who are experienced musicians, URock offers the chance to further develop their talent and helps other kids learn and grow as musicians.

The second goal of the program is focused on improving the lives of the kids and families in the Little Falls area. St. Francis Music Center and its URock program offers a place for kids (and families) who are passionate about music. Music is all about harmony, communication, playing well together,

learning about new cultures through music, and creativity—we hope kids carry their new skills and positive experiences into their schools and communities.

The program also gives the music teachers opportunities to incorporate violence prevention lessons in ways that engage teens. By using critical thinking and analysis of the portrayal of violence, alcohol use and sexuality in song lyrics and social media, teens are often surprised at the message that some songs are sending out—both positive and negative. Teens then debate what message they want to send with their lyrics and use problem-solving skills among band members to play their style of music yet send a positive message that resonates with their lives and hopes and dreams for the future.

URock Against Violence differs from other music programs and summer camps. By design, it strives to be welcoming and inclusive, focusing less on competition and more on cooperation, less on talent or ability and more on mutual respect, care and learning. This approach builds self-esteem and keeps kids coming back. We see talent, confidence and a sense of community emerge.

||| St. FRANCIS
MUSIC CENTER



"Hootenunnies" sing on Channel 9 in St. Paul.

1965

Sisters begin serving in partnership with St. Cloud Diocesan priests in Maracay, Venezuela.

1966

Sisters begin wearing new headdress eliminating coif, bandeau and guimpe.

1966

Sisters become eligible for Social Security.

1966

Sisters permitted to change back to baptismal names.

1967

The band Fovero performed at the 2015 Green Fair Folk Festival.

Finally, the URock program seeks to expand the community's access to high quality music by offering free performances. Bands and musicians from URock play at various local events—Little Falls Dam Festival, Morrison County Fair, in addition to the Green Fair Folk Festival. And the band Power Plant has performed at the music festival in St. Cloud, "Summertime by George." Realizing that many in the community may not be ready to pick up an instrument, URock hosts monthly events with live music for everyone to enjoy. One Friday a month the performance room at St. Francis Music Center turns into the K & C Café, a "coffeehouse" atmosphere featuring a local professional musician, along with a low-cost snack bar and games and activities for kids, teens and families. As with all of the Music Center's activities, this event offers teens and families a friendly, welcoming and safe place to experience the joy of music.



New Website sfmusiccenter.org

For over three decades, St. Francis Music Center has had the great pleasure of providing arts education to the rural population of central Minnesota. Dedicated to the performing and creative arts, the Music Center is committed to high-quality instruction, innovative programming and the sponsorship of musical events. To update our image and media presence, we've redesigned our website using our new logo and brand. Our new website is easy to access from all mobile devices and tablets. In addition, we're engaging with the most popular social media sites, namely Facebook and Twitter, and encourage you to participate in these platforms with us.

St. Francis Music Center will still be the same awesome place it's always been. Please visit our new website, see photos and videos, and learn about all the Music Center has to offer—and bring music into your life today!

Sisters begin experimenting with small group living.

1967

St. Otto's Home moves to new building.

1967

1967

Cemetery enlarged.

1967

1967

Park House moved to Assisi Park.

Congregation begins billing parishes for altar breads.

“Go and rebuild my Church” set the stage for social concerns gathering



Lora Knafla (left) from the St. Cloud Mission Office receives a blessing with oil from Sister Michelle L'Allier, expressing the message, “Using the gifts God has given you, and the passion in your heart, go and rebuild my Church.”

One of the events taking place during the Franciscan Sisters 125th anniversary year included a gathering of people committed to social justice/social concerns throughout the St. Cloud Diocese. The April 10 gathering, which drew 120 participants, allowed the sisters to acknowledge and thank the many people who are committed to Gospel work and social justice in the diocese. In addition, the gathering highlighted the Franciscan Sisters’ commitment to social justice since their founding in 1891.

Co-sponsored by the St. Cloud Diocese Office of Social Concerns, the afternoon opened with prayer and song. Presenters Jennifer Honek from Onamia, Tammy Boushek from Alexandria and Chuck Ernst from Newman Center in St. Cloud shared their parishes’ accomplishments and what motivates and keeps them committed. Bishop Don Kettler expressed his deep appreciation for the gathering: “I think it is very important to be here.” He encouraged, complimented and challenged those serving in social justice to remain steadfast in their work for others.

Living the Gospel courageously . . .



Sister Dorothy Ann Rudolph says, “I am just a little instrument working for the good Lord. I do what I can, although not as much as I used to.” At this stage of her life, she considers her ministry to be one of presence where she does “little things for little people,” visits and helps the poor, walks for the unborn and works at St. Mary’s parish. “I serve God and God alone.”

One day she was working in her kitchen when she heard a ruckus outside and discovered a cat who had caught a robin in its mouth. “I picked up the cat, removed the robin and then talked to the cat. I said that it had enough food from its human family and it did not need to harm the robin. The cat’s owner came out and I explained that I had scolded her cat; she seemed to not understand, but that’s beside the point. I walked with the bird in my hands for a while, showed it to people in my house and told them I saved its life, set it on the ground where it looked around, then it chirped and flew off. After that, I heard a chirping every day and offered crumbs for nourishment.

With the Eucharist as her center, her wish each day is “May I be a thanksgiving song for the Lord.”

Mel Euteneuer: donor, volunteer, former employee

Sister Cordy Korkowski, director of Donor Relations

It's my honor and part of my development work to profile people who support the Franciscan Sisters. As we mark the 125th anniversary of the Franciscan Sisters, an interview with Mel Euteneuer was on the top of my list.

Mel's interest in health care actually began in the Navy when he served as a hospital corpsman. When he returned home, he attended St. Cloud State University and received his business degree. His job pursuits led him to St. Gabriel's Hospital in Little Falls in 1960. He was interviewed by the hospital administrator, Sister Yvonne Becker, and hired as business manager of St. Gabriel's. Mel recalls, "I remembered how she checked to see that my values were compatible with the Franciscan Sisters' mission." Sister Yvonne stressed the importance of the dignity of each person in his work, reminding him to balance time with his family and work demands.

Mel became assistant administrator to Sister Mary Ellen Dinndorf in 1966. "Sister Mary Ellen was a mentor to me and helped me greatly with decision-making skills," Mel recalled. Two years later, he was appointed as the first lay administrator of St. Gabriel's Hospital serving from 1968-1984. Mel remarked, "This was quite something. The sisters held these roles for almost 80 years. From day one, they made me feel very welcome and supported me."



Sister Cordy Korkowski, Mel and Julie Euteneuer. Mel says he has "a great love and respect for the Franciscan Sisters and what they stand for in our lives. They have been a tremendous influence on my faith as well."

In 1984, Mel moved on to become vice president of health operations for Franciscan Sisters Healthcare, (a position he would hold until 1993). Mel worked with the CEOs and the boards of directors for all the Franciscan facilities.

Today, Mel is retired and volunteers in the sisters' library, and he and Julie, his wife, both volunteer at fund-raising events. Julie is a member of the Franciscan Gift Shop advisory committee.

Throughout the years, Mel and Julie have been generous financial supporters of the Franciscan Sisters and true partners in promoting the Gospel work that was started 125 years ago. In addition, they are members of the St. Elizabeth of Hungary Society and have included the sisters in their estate plan.



When **Sister Trudy Schommer** retired from teaching, she decided that since she had more time and less responsibility, she would now choose prayer and consciously prepare for her first face-to-face meeting with God as her priorities. In addition to daily Mass, the Office and spiritual reading, Sister Trudy spends an hour each day in Centering Prayer: one-half hour in the morning and another half-hour in the afternoon. In the evening before retiring, she spends a half hour praying with her favorite saints, especially Mary, when she holds her family, friends and all who have asked her community to remember them in prayer.

When Sister Trudy came home to the Motherhouse in Little Falls, she was asked to be a part-time sacristan. This is her favorite work done in the presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. She also helps with transportation of sisters who need a ride to wherever. "I decided that if any sister asks me to drive her someplace and if I were available, I would drive her. This is a wonderful way to get to know another sister better."

Franciscan Earth Citizen awards announced

With inspiration from Pope Francis's encyclical on the environment, *Laudato Sí*, the 2016 Franciscan Earth Citizen recipients were chosen by how they live the values promoted by Pope Francis and held dear by the Franciscan Sisters. Specific values include respect for the integrity of creation and for all people especially the poor, generosity in sharing their gifts with others, appreciation for the beauty of the earth, responsible use of goods, engaging with environmental policies and efforts to live sustainably.



Sister Donna Zetah has deep love for and dedication to the Hispanic population as she lives out the Gospel by helping the poor and working for the common good as expressed in *Laudato Sí*. As a missionary in the Altiplano of Peru, Sister Donna used her nursing background to assist those in need. Serving

many years in the Camp Health Aid Program, Sister Donna traveled with the migrants as they followed the harvests. She has the ability to maintain contacts and friendships with many of the individuals she has served over the years.



Associate Karen and Francis Schellinger sold 102 wooded acres in Avon to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources in 2006. This area has since become a state scientific and natural area called Avon Hills Forest SAN. At the time of the sale, Karen commented, "We want it to stay just as it

is. We don't ever want it to change." Karen exemplifies several principles of *Laudato Sí* responsible use of

the earth's resources, preserving the earth's gifts for the common good, setting limits and teaching clear-minded self-restraint, dialoguing on environmental policies, alerting us to the need for human beings to develop new lifestyles.



Associates Ramona and Russ Kadow live with great love for nature and for our earthly home. Their home, by a river, includes a large garden that provides food for their family. They have a special love for Saint Francis and try to follow his example

to respect, love and care for everything and everyone. They are thoughtful about the use and care of things, aware that the good of each one is connected to all. As teachers, they continue to educate themselves, sharing generously their blessings and knowledge with others, both in word and action. Their lives express the challenge, peace and joy of trying to live justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with all.

The Franciscan Earth Citizen awards were presented at the Chorale Concert on May 1 at St. Francis Convent, Little Falls.



2016 Taste of St. Cloud succeeds

The annual Taste of St. Cloud, a fundraiser for the Franciscan Community Volunteer program, brought people together for food and fellowship, music and silent auction, conversation and laughter.

The FCV program is built on three pillars: service, community living and Franciscan spirituality. Volunteers, aged 21-30, make an 11-month commitment to serve full-time in local nonprofit agencies while accepting the challenge of living simply and in accordance with Gospel values. They have given tens of thousands of hours to serving children, immigrants, the elderly and people who are homeless, poor and disenfranchised in the St. Cloud area.



Sister Jeanne Lieser meets new friends at the Taste.



Pat Schlauderaff, FCV program director, and Bishop Don Kettler enjoy the good food and amazing weather.

Stay up to date with all FSLF events



November 16, 1932—
February 7, 2016

In loving memory Dee Hanisch, 83

Franciscan Associate Dee Hanisch died February 7, 2016, in Sauk Rapids. Dee understood her love for Jesus as the foundation of her being. She expressed her faith and love for others by being a nurse. After retirement, Dee initiated the parish nurse program at St. Paul's Catholic Church in St. Cloud. She was active in the American Cancer Society and other initiatives related to cancer.

“My spiritual life has increased a hundredfold!” wrote Associate Dee Hanisch regarding the 10th anniversary of her commitment to the Associate Relationship. Geri Dietz, minister for Franciscan Associates said, “When I would see her, I would be reminded of that Hubert Humphrey quote: ‘It’s not what they take away from you that counts—it’s what you do with what you have left.’ In the spirit of Saint Francis, Dee did ‘what was hers to do.’”

ALL ARE WELCOME

125TH ANNIVERSARY OPEN HOUSE

Saturday, July 9, 1-4 p.m. 2016



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