



NOJOSHING NOTES

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NOJOSHING is an Indian word. It means "Straight Tongue."

In 1849, the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi built their Motherhouse on land that was called Nojoshing by the Indians, because it protrudes out into Lake Michigan like a straight tongue.

Sisters Engage in Outreach to Those in Need

Throughout the lives of the sisters, they have reached out to those in need through their various ministries of service. With the assistance of Jill and Steven Haberman, directors of the Office of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation (JPIC), the sisters at St. Francis Convent continue to extend their ministry of service to others. On March 23, eight sisters participated in the *Urban Stations of the Cross*. They visited various outreach ministries that provide services for the people in need in the most impoverished neighborhood in the city of Milwaukee. Upon return, the sisters decided to reach out to the MacCanon Brown Homeless Sanctuary. They prepared 40 bag lunches that included notes of encouragement written by the sisters.

On June 8, 34 sisters along with Br. Robert, OFM Cap., met outside St. Francis Convent to participate in the Virtual Walk for the Hungry sponsored by Capuchin Community Services. Money raised assisted the Capuchin Friars in their ministries at St. Ben's Community Meal Program and the House of Peace Emergency Food Program. Those who were unable to walk, cheered the walkers on as they proceeded on their six-lap trek (two miles) around the convent. In addition to the money raised by participants throughout the city of Milwaukee, Usinger's Famous Sausage donated one pound of meat for each registered participant.

The sisters gathered again on June 14 to assemble snack bags to be taken to the



House of Peace to be distributed to those who are homeless. The sisters decorated each bag, filled them with bottled water and snacks and included a caring message written by the sisters. When the

bags were all ready to go, a prayer of blessing was said over them:

Bless this food and grant that all who eat it may be strong in body and grow in your love. May all who receive this simple snack pack also receive our joy.

(Top) Sisters Rosa Suazo (right) and Ruth Gardner (center) decorating paper snack bags.

(Inset) Sr. Lourdet Van Driel writing a note.

Convent Activities & Plantings

Feast of the Sacred Heart



On June 11, the sisters revived an old tradition in the congregation – celebrating the Feast of the Sacred Heart. Years ago, the sisters would gather by the outdoor, life-sized statue of the Sacred Heart that had been donated by Dr. Thomas Fitzgibbons, a former physician and benefactor of the sisters. Here they dedicated themselves and their ministries to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This year as they gathered around the statue, the sisters prayed the *Litany of the Sacred Heart* and spent time in quiet contemplation

praying for the needs of the world. This was followed by enjoying each other's company over coffee and sweet rolls on the second-floor porch of Elizabeth Hall.



Celebrating OSF

Springtime brings many opportunities to celebrate. On May 28, the sisters at St. Francis Convent gathered in prayer to express their gratitude to God for the abundant blessings given to the congregation since its founding 172 years ago. Giacomo Falluca, the chairperson of the board and CEO for Palermo's Pizza, donated pizzas for the sisters to celebrate Foundation Day. Ice cream sundaes with all the toppings were an added treat. One can only wonder if the early foundresses were there among them delighting in the joyful spirit of the sisters!

Memorial Day Weekend Plant Sale

With the coming of Memorial Day, many people find themselves in garden centers purchasing flowers, herbs, and garden plants with dreams of beautiful flower beds and bountiful gardens. Due to the loving care of Sr. Helene Mertes and her volunteers, the congregation was able to sponsor a plant sale during the Memorial Day Weekend. The plants they raised from clippings and seeds were on bright display as people came to purchase assorted herbs, vegetables and flowers. The plants that were not sold now grace the flower beds and gardens on the convent grounds.



— *Bursting Forth in Bloom*

Foundation Day

An Abundance of Blooms

Spring found an abundance of flowers and trees in bloom on the convent grounds. Everywhere one was in the presence of beauty. What a wonderful gift after the winter and the long COVID season! Lady Bird Johnson once said, “Where the flowers bloom, so does hope.” After all we have endured coping with the pandemic the past year and a half, flowers can be messengers of hope that can brighten our spirit. As we begin to see “some light at the end of the tunnel,” flowers can also be a reminder to us to reflect on what beautiful “flowers” we have planted in our lives by our actions and words that bring hope and beauty in the lives of those around us.



iPads Increase Participation & Communication

For several years, the retired sisters at the convent have been gradually introduced to the use of the iPad for many different purposes. Playing games was a starting point for keeping mental ‘muscles’ challenged and resilient, and this has progressed more recently to Zoom visits with family and friends, which have enhanced the sisters’ lives a great deal. Ordinarily, travel to visit family and friends is difficult for our older sisters and often their loved ones as well. With the pandemic, all travel was curtailed. The access to face-to-face visits has added so much enjoyment and many meaningful encounters for everyone.

The sisters thank the many donors who, through the years, have gifted these iPads and assure them that these devices are an undreamed of blessing in the lives of the retired sisters.

Sisters Angela Perrizo (l) and Catherine Morrissey (r) enjoy virtual visits with family members.



Tree of Life Dedication Held on Convent Grounds



Spring in Wisconsin is always an 'iffy' season because frequently winter hangs around with its cold wind and cloudy days. This year we picked June 17 for the second Tree of Life dedication, and we were blessed with a lovely sunny and warm day.

The Persian Lilac tree was in full bloom and the 2021 plaque, in honor of all those whose names had been submitted, was hung from one of the branches. With the St. Francis grotto in the background, it is a very peaceful and prayerful space.



This is one of the prayers from the dedication: *O God, Creator of life and Sustainer of seed and soil, of tree and flower, you have created this world and all that lives in it. It is to you that we come in this prayer of dedication and blessing, for you are the giver of life and the sustainer of all that lives.*

These past two years, due to COVID-19 restrictions on gatherings, the dedication has been done simply with only a few staff members from the Fund Development Office present. We look forward to having the sisters present at next year's dedication to share in this special event.



Please remember the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi in your will.

A bequest is a wonderful way to support our retired sisters and is a testimony of your care and concern for them.

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Upper left: The 2021 plaque hangs on a branch of the Persian lilac tree which was in full bloom.

Lower left: The shape of the flowers as they perch on the branches call to mind the festive look of Christmas trees adorned with real burning candles.

Above: The dedication ceremony included baskets holding the names of those to be remembered.