



Sisters of
St. Francis
of Assisi

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.

Three Significant Celebrations to Share

Catching up on the news of the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi takes us back to October of 2021. Within one week, three significant celebrations occurred.

A **Jubilee celebration** was held October 3 for the classes of 2020 and 2021. While 2020 Jubilarians had no formal celebration due to COVID-19, the combined celebration was still low-key, with no other sisters or guests present. Being together in person with classmates, though, was a most important part of the day.

The celebration in Troubadour (photo below) included dinner and a Mass that was live-streamed to sisters, associates and guests. Jubilee is a time of remembrance and gratitude, and those elements were not diminished in a time of pandemic.

October 4, the **Feast of St. Francis of Assisi**, also marked the **20th anniversary of the merger** of the Franciscan Sisters of Baltimore with the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi. This was a double reason to celebrate. At Mass that morning, Sister Diana De Bruin in her welcome, and

Fr. Jim Schroeder in his homily, spoke of the common Franciscan call shared by both communities, the openness to the prompting of the Holy Spirit to merge, and the connection of ministries to persons who are developmentally challenged. These were cited as strong factors in helping the two congregations come together as one. After Mass, the sisters gathered in the Elizabeth Hall dining room to continue sharing and to enjoy coffee and donuts. (photo on Page 3)

The **Annual Corporate Ministries Conference** on October 6-7, marked the 50th year of participants from the OSF-sponsored ministries coming together to learn, share and inspire each other. For this significant milestone, everyone gathered at St. Francis Convent in St. Francis, Wis. The theme of the conference was *Franciscan Ministry: The Urgent Call to Embrace the Healing Power of Blessing*. Sisters Eileen Quinn and Mary Therese White, OSF, were the presenters. Not only did the participants return home grateful for the learnings and insights they had gained about blessings, but they also felt empowered to actively share blessings with others.



Called to Be of Service

For the sisters living at St. Francis Convent, the call to be of service to those in need did not stop with retirement. Thanks to the efforts of our Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Office directors, Jill and Steven Haberman, each Monday morning the sisters gather to learn about issues that affect those most in need. In addition to the information they receive, they are invited to put these learnings into action. Sisters and associates can view these sessions on line.

From September 1 through October 4, the sisters joined others throughout the world in celebrating the Season of Creation. It was a time for prayer, reflection and action focusing on the need to care for God's creation. Sisters went with Jill and Steven on a pilgrimage to the MacCanon Brown Homeless Sanctuary located in Milwaukee's most impoverished 53206 zip code.

Sister MacCanon Brown (pictured at left below) shared with the sisters her dream for the five-story warehouse that was purchased to house services for persons who are homeless and "at-risk." They saw how the third floor of the building is being transformed into an urban agricultural center.

In collaboration with the Milwaukee School of Engineering, an aquaponics system will provide fresh food to the surrounding area that has been designated as a "food desert."

The sisters were grateful to see the work being done in the poorest section of the city. When they

arrived back at the convent, they shared with the sisters who were unable to make the pilgrimage.

On October 25, Anne Haines shared with the sisters information about a joint venture undertaken by Milwaukee's Catholic Worker House and the Franciscan Peacemakers. She spoke of how the former St. Conrad Friary in Milwaukee is being transformed into St. Bakhita Catholic Worker House, named after Canossian Daughter of Charity Sister Josephine Bakhita (1869 – 1947). As a young child, she was sold into slavery, but eventually was given her freedom.

She was known for her faith and forgiveness. The facility named for her will provide services for women caught in human trafficking. It will open in March 2022 and will house 10 women. The Franciscan Peacemakers, who already work with women survivors of sexual exploitation, is partnering with the project.

Upon learning more about this initiative, the sisters decided to get involved by baking cookies and packing lunches for the Franciscan Peacemakers' street ministers who provide food and clothing for the women. Sr. Clara Wang is pictured below working on the project. Each lunch bag contained a prayer card and the commitment to continue to pray for the women and those who minister to them.



Continuing The Mission in Retirement

Santa's elves had extra help this Christmas season! If anyone had come to St. Francis Convent on November 17, they would have found the sisters from Elizabeth Hall in their community room busily stuffing fiberfill into 123 teddy bears and llamas. Sister Richelle Ranallo (pictured at right) spent a whole week cutting out these flannel animals and sewing them together. Sister Kathy Cairns finished the project by sewing the stuffing hole closed.

This labor of love was in response to a project begun by Debra Manske of South Milwaukee, Wis., who became aware that there were over 4,500 Afghan children under the age of 12 living at Fort McCoy, Wis. She invited others to join her in making stuffed animals that would bring comfort to the children in this time of transition to a new country. Just picture the joy in the children's eyes when they received one of these precious stuffed animals that were put together by the sisters!

No one can deny that we are living in very challenging times! Our lawmakers are being confronted with very difficult decisions that affect the well-being of everyone. During the month of December 2021, all the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi were invited to volunteer to be prayer partners throughout 2022 to one of Wisconsin's legislators.

In collaboration with seven other congregations of women religious in Wisconsin, 189 sisters and their associates are providing prayerful support to their elected leaders. This flows out of the sisters' mission to work for a more just and caring society that works to enhance the lives of all people.

All legislators received a letter informing them who will be providing them prayerful support, and the sisters' commitment to pray that God will inspire and guide them, and give them courage as they make difficult decisions to promote the common good for all.

Celebrating the Feast of St. Francis and the merger (article - Page 1)

Clockwise
(from lower left):

Sr. Catherine Morrissey
Sr. Rita Ann Haderer
Sr. Bernice Mertens
Sr. Mary Lou Herrmann
Sr. Ann Kelley
Sr. Margaret Gardner



Below:
Sr. Ruth Marie Soens shows off her stuffed animal handiwork.



Below:
Sisters Genevieve Van Driel & Mary Jerome Lacy compare their stuffed giraffes.



Canceled Stamp Program



In past issues of *Nojoshing Notes*, there have been articles describing how our sisters trim, process and sell canceled stamps as a source of income. Originally the purpose was to help support our missionaries in China in the 1930s and 1940s. Since 1949, when all missionaries were expelled from China, the funds have been used for the needs of sisters in retirement.

Key to this endeavor in the last few decades was Sister Margaret Ruddy, and it is with great sadness that we write to let you know that Sister Margaret died on December 29, 2021. She was the last sister to manage all the administrative details connected with getting stamps to market. For those of you who faithfully supplied Sister with canceled stamps, we want to thank you. Your support was very meaningful to her.

A group of sisters is considering what the future will hold for processing stamps. For now, we will not be accepting donations of canceled stamps. When more is known, we will announce it in a future issue of this newsletter. May Sister Margaret rest in peace.

Sr. Lenore's Popular Cookies



Sister Lenore Steilen's *Pecan Finger Cookies* continue to gain in popularity every year. Their fame got another boost this year when the *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel* published an article about Sister on December 1, 2021, in its annual Christmas cookie section. Her recipe and photo were included in the article. Amazingly at age 98, she is an active baker, and each year bakes *Pecan Finger Cookies* to sell at the Christmas Boutique. Even when the boutique was canceled at the last minute this year due to COVID-19 concerns, she sold out to in-house customers among the staff and sisters.

In addition to holiday baking, Sister Lenore bakes cookies for the lunches the sisters put together to help feed those who are experiencing hunger in shelters and on the streets. Her passion and love for baking is heartfelt and shared generously.

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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