

# Co-Franciscan News



FRANCISCAN SISTERS OF THE SACRED HEART  
FRANKFORT, IL



## Let us pray... for you!

We would be glad to pray for your intentions. You can send your prayer requests through the form at this link: <http://www.fssh.net/submit-a-prayer-request>.

*Dear Friends,*

*Please help us save paper, ink and postage costs by receiving our communications via email rather than mail. Please send your email address and your name to:*

*[Vallerie.Wonders@fssh.net](mailto:Vallerie.Wonders@fssh.net).*

*Once you approve a test email, you can start receiving PDFs of our newsletters in full color. Thank you!*

Vallerie Wonders  
Director of Development

*Dear Friends of the Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart,*

November is one of those transitional months for me with seasonal and liturgical shifts. This year I am more conscious of what Joyce Rupp refers to as “hope-filled bookend events” that being the Feast of all Saints in the beginning of the month and ending with Thanksgiving.

I am so much more aware these days now as I work out of my “corner office” of the many “saints” we have around us. I also sense from the news how these times, filled with political divisions and natural challenges before and around us, need “saints.”

Because of you, my thanksgiving list is extra-long this year. I give thanks for the many “saints” who offer assistance and kindness to me and our Sisters. I am mindful that folks on the front lines are helping others carry a heavy burden throughout the recovery of Hurricanes Helene and Milton and that the brave ones in harm’s way in the Middle East on the Russian-Ukrainian border are restoring hope and purpose. Closer to home I give a shout out to our employees who do the little unexpected tasks dedicating many hours to loving care. Kudos to our Associates who hold us in prayer and support our ministry efforts. Thanks to our volunteers who always meet our needs by going the extra mile. Special consideration for those neighbors who celebrate liturgies with us, fix our cars, serve us in the fast-food lines and grocery stores, sing happy birthday, buy our raffle tickets, or simply greet us across the parking lot, etc. I honestly want to mention every person I encounter for you have enriched my life, and I can only pray it has been mutual.



Truly this Thanksgiving I am simply grateful to be part of the Kingdom of God. May you celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday with love in your heart, prosperous vision in your mind, and gratitude in your being. Before November ends and just as I have attempted, I invite everyone to consider those who have sustained your hope and renewed your spirit in some small or grand way and send a text, an email, or silent prayer of thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving wishes to everyone setting ablaze God's love! May the warm glow of autumn surround you as you celebrate the holiday with family and friends.

Peace and all good,  
Sr. Mary Elizabeth Imler  
General Community Minister

## In Memoriam

### *Sister Innocence Mills (1924-2024)*



Sister Innocence Mills could not remember exactly when she started considering religious life. On one occasion, she was looking at the Sacred Heart Messenger and the picture of the Sacred Heart of Jesus caught her attention. She also saw a picture of an elderly Sister praying the rosary and noticed that her hands looked as though they had done much hard work. Being a farm girl who had worked hard with her hands on the family farm, that picture left a lasting impression on her and drew her to our congregation in 1940. Throughout her years of ministry, Sister Innocence was the hands of Christ serving others. Fifty of those years were in food service where she used not only her hands but her heart as she gave the “cup” in His name. She was so grateful to minister with the older Sisters whom she called her “holy books.” From them she learned that whatever you did in the kitchen became a short prayer. She also learned that, if you are in charge, you must lead by doing and not just by words. Even in retirement, Sister continued being of service wherever there was a need, lovingly being called the community’s “Go-fer.” For 81 years as a religious, Sister Innocence graciously offered a “cup of blessing” to many.

*Sister Innocence, we will certainly miss your willing and generous spirit, but may you now drink joyfully of the eternal “cup of love.”*

### *Sister Theresa Diane Lopez (1932-2024)*



Sister Therese Diane Lopez discovered the Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart when she worked at Queen of Angels Hospital in Los Angeles, CA, and soon after entered the congregation in 1957. During her years in various ministries, her motherly manner was evident to many. She found special joy in pastoral care ministry as she met many wonderful and faith-filled people. She felt blessed to have been present with families as they watched and waited with a parent, spouse, or child to live their final hours on this side of eternity. On her 60th Jubilee in 2017, Sister said that she always felt that God was with her, asking her for daily signs of her love for Him. She commented that it was not always easy to say “Yes” to her God. However, with the grace of God, she continued to be open to what the Lord asked of her on a daily basis. She added that her heart was full of gratitude for the blessing of her religious vocation, especially her vocation to this Franciscan congregation dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Those who had lived with Sister knew her to live her vocation intensely and completely and the great commandment of love with much passion.

*Sister Theresa Diane, may you live eternally in beauty and glory among all the angels and saints in the kingdom of love.*

### *Sister Margaret Anne Floto (1940-2024)*



After high school graduation, Sister Margaret Anne Floto visited our congregation and heard God speaking to her heart saying she would spend the rest of her life in this community. She tried to ignore this because of her plan to become a nurse. But the Lord kept nudging her until she finally entered the congregation in 1958. Sister earned a BS in Nursing and an MS in Health Services Administration, which enabled her to follow her dream of being a nurse for many years in our different institutions. Wherever she was missioned, she was also the organist because of her gift of music. In 1979, Sister was elected to our Leadership Team, serving three terms. During that time she worked with our Brazilian mission, eventually starting the Icoaraci Auxiliary which initiated the Garage Sale. In retirement, she contributed to issues that she cared deeply about, especially our connection with our Associates, Volunteers, and young women. Evident in her life were her devotion to the Sacred Heart, love for people, especially family, loyalty to friends, and openness to goodness wherever she found it. Of great importance was her faith journey and desire to become the person God was calling her to be. On her 60<sup>th</sup> Jubilee Sister said, “I love my God, and as the song says, ‘God is the center of my life.’ That is my goal, and that is what gives me passion for life.”

*Sister Margaret Anne, may the eyes of Jesus gaze lovingly upon you, His beloved one, and may He eternally hold you in the center of His Sacred Heart!*

## 800th Anniversary of Stigmata of St. Francis



This year throughout the world, Franciscans are celebrating the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of St. Francis of Assisi receiving the stigmata, the five wounds of Christ crucified. Thomas Celano, a biographer of St. Francis, wrote that while Francis was at prayer he saw a vision of “a man like a seraph having six wings, standing over him with hands outstretched and feet joined together, fixed to a cross.” After seeing the vision, “marks of nails began to appear in his hands and feet.” This fulfilled Francis’ desire to be totally conformed to Christ. It is an invitation to us to make contemplative silence a part of our daily lives so we can hear the voice of God. Just as the finger of God touched Francis, may we touch the poor, the sick, and the needy.

## 350th Anniversary of Apparitions

The 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Apparitions of the Sacred Heart to Sr. Margaret Mary Alacoque is being celebrated in Paray-le-Monial, France. Father Étienne Kern, rector of the sanctuary, said that the apparitions invite us to “allow ourselves to be enflamed with love by the heart of Jesus, to return love for love, and to have a heart of compassion for the world.” From October 13-16, 2024, Sisters Mary Elizabeth Imler and Christina Fuller attended a conference at the sanctuary for leaders of congregations dedicated to the Sacred Heart.



## *Article Published on Agnes of Assisi*



Congratulations to Sr. Mary Elizabeth Imler whose article, “Agnes of Assisi: Sister, Sacrificial Lamb and Saint” has been published in *Franciscan Voices*, a Franciscan series of articles from Franciscan scholars around the globe. The introduction to the article says: “Sr. Mary Elizabeth Imler heralds the Franciscan concept of “fraternitas” whereby Jesus as the Human One rightfully claims to each one, ‘I am your brother!’ This makes all of humankind (and all creation) ‘sisters’ and ‘brothers’ to one another. Thus, every woman is ‘sister’ through the mystery of the Incarnation and Redemption of Jesus. All of this has shaped how she perceives the concept of ‘sister’ underlying this article about Clare’s blood sister, Catherine.” Use the following link to enjoy reading this inspiring and enlightening article:

<https://tinyurl.com/5c4bb6b6>.

## St. Clare Statue Dedication

On June 13, the University of St. Francis (USF) Board of Trustees, Joliet Franciscans, and many of our Sisters celebrated the blessing of the new St. Clare statue on the St. Clare campus, home of the Leach College of Nursing. The statue was dedicated to our congregation for the generous contribution of our School of Nursing. Under threatening summer storms, the sun broke and graced us all. Sister Jeanne Bessette opened the service while Sister Joyce Shanabarger concluded with the Blessing of St. Clare. The statue is a one of a kind made by Tony Frey from the studio of Timothy Schmaltz. On the base of the statue will be these words from the artist: Sister Clare “May the love you have in your hearts be shown outwardly in your deeds.” Spring 2024 by Indweller Artistic, Inc.







## Celebrating Sister Genevieve Raupp

On October 6, Sister Genevieve Raupp was celebrated for her 40 years of service to St. Charles Borromeo School in Fort Wayne, IN. Also recognized were all the Franciscan Sisters who have ministered there since the school began in 1958. Sister Genevieve has resigned from this ministry

because she was elected to the Leadership Team in April and is now relocating to the Motherhouse.



## *60th Anniversary of Ministry in Brazil!*

On September 14, a number of the Sisters from the U.S. gathered with our Brazilian Sisters to celebrate the 60th anniversary of our ministry in Brazil. Many parishioners also attended the Mass of Thanksgiving during which Sister Iodete Araujo de Miranda and Lovina Francis Pammit, 25th Jubilarians, renewed their vows. After the 2-hour Mass and reception, invited guests joined the Sisters for a special dinner.



## Street Kids Ministry Celebrates 19th Anniversary

In Barcarena, Brazil, the Street Kids Ministry celebrated its 19th year of existence. On behalf of the children, teenagers, and their parents, Sister Cipriana Maria Dalmacio Lima expressed appreciation for our Sisters being a part of this dreamed and realized project. Throughout these years, many children have been given the hope and strength to grow and mature in God's love.



**ASSOCIATE** The Frankfort/Motherhouse Associate Circle embarked on a special initiative to collect gently used household items for the Migrant Ministry of Catholic Parishes of Oak Park, IL. As followers of Francis and Clare, they hoped to preach the Good News through their actions. By embracing the principles of Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle, they extended a helping hand to our brothers and sisters in the wider community who have great needs.





## Two New Associates Make First Commitment

**With joy and compassion we live the Gospel in the spirit of Francis and Clare through prayer and works of neighborly love.**

**FSSH Associate Mission Statement**



Mary Massingale



Eileen Redican

We joyfully welcomed Mary Massingale and Eileen Redican as they made their Initial Commitment to live the Gospel and embrace the Franciscan values of prayer, simplicity, and growth through conversion and service. On September 8,

their relationship with the Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart and their fellow Associates was celebrated and confirmed during the Sunday Mass by the many Sisters, Associates, and guests.



Do you know a friend, neighbor, colleague, or family member who feels drawn to meaningful conversations about living the values of Francis and Clare in our world today? Do they seem to desire a deeper grounding during times of change? Have you ever thought about inviting them to explore the Associate relationship?

***"Set ablaze the fire of God's newness . . . With the Word in my heart, I cannot keep quiet . . ."***

Visit our website, [fssh.net](http://fssh.net) or contact Sr. Christina Fuller, Director of Associates, at [christina.fuller@fssh.net](mailto:christina.fuller@fssh.net) or Assistant Director Pat Tomich at [Patricia.Tomich@fssh.net](mailto:Patricia.Tomich@fssh.net).

## California Circle Holds Hybrid Annual Retreat, Connecting Through Zoom

The California Associates' Annual Retreat/Circle Meeting was held on Saturday, July 13, at the Sierra Retreat Center at St. Catherine's by the Sea, Ventura, CA. Circle members prepared potluck dishes for lunch, shared reflections from the book *Live Like Francis* after reading chapters about "The Poverty of Christ," discussed efforts to fight human trafficking, and shared milestones and acknowledgements.

At right is a photo from that gathering that includes (back row from left) Dee Kunin DeLapa, Lee Menichella, Peter DeLapa, Kerry Parker; (front row from left): Sister Ruth Agee, Johana Lozano, Adele Amurao. Some attended the gathering via Zoom: Steve Boehm, Dana VanderMey, Sister Christina Fuller, Patricia Tomich, and Sister Christine Bowman. Corey Nakashima took the photo and expertly handled the technology to connect everyone together on Zoom.



## Retirement Ministries for Sister Debrah

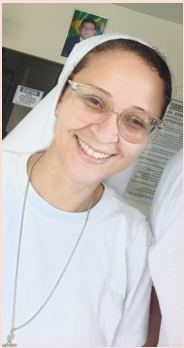


I recently was surprised to hear this question, “Now that you’re retired, what are you doing?” You may think that I just sit and eat bon bons all day! Quite the contrary!

I am a kindergarten aide in school for a couple of hours on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Fridays, and on Wednesdays, I sub, if needed. On Mondays, I explain the meaning of the Mass responses to the entire school at the schoolwide prayer service. The pastor asked me to train Eucharistic Ministers, and so far, I have trained 14. I have also been asked to do a Scripture and Communion Service when no deacon or priest is available, and weekly I take Holy Communion to five parishioners. Our DRE invited me to teach a few 7th graders who missed many religion classes last year. This is a 10-week class to prepare them for receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation.

So don't worry that I'm bored. God has called me to minister at my parish in many ways. I do enjoy all of it and occasionally eat bon bons just to celebrate God's goodness! — *Sr. Debrah Funfsinn*

## *Sister Viviane Shares Her Ministry*



In Barcarena, Brazil, at our parish we have a Pastoral Care of Listening program of which I am a part. Our task is to visit patients in the hospital, listening and bringing them the Word of God, a word of comfort and hope for those who are going through difficult situations in life due to an illness. During the visits, we encounter these situations: the need for listening that these people have and the need to be heard in the face of their anguish, pain, and uncertainty. How good these visits are for everyone who is part of the team because when we meet each other, when we become aware of each other's pain, we become more human, more sensitive. As a song dedicated to Saint Francis says, “It’s in giving that you receive,” and that’s what I experience on every visit I make. - *Sr. Viviane Vieira de Sousa*

## St. Monica Ministry for Domestic Violence Outreach

Several of our Associates are just a few of St. Elizabeth Seton parishioners who have resurrected the St. Monica Ministry at their parish in Orland Hills, IL. This Ministry is created for Domestic Violence Outreach concentrating on Awareness, Education, Services, Assistance, and Prevention of Domestic Violence. October was Domestic Violence Awareness Month during which we were encouraged to pray for those affected by domestic violence. Each of us knows someone who is or has experienced domestic violence. During that month, we recognized and honored their courage, their healing, and their work. At the same time, we remembered the lives lost and forever altered by domestic violence.

## Associate Waren Tsafa's Update on Her Ministry in Nigeria

I am very excited to share that the Paradiso Dei Bambino Nursery and Elementary School have started within our facility. We are situated in a very deprived community and the school, initially meant to be a source of sustenance for our home, is experiencing a setback due to the harsh economic reality. In any case, I am still extremely happy because it's an opportunity to catechize more children. Most of these children come from homes with zero Christian exposure. Meanwhile, I sincerely appreciate your prayers and financial support. I thank God for you and the blessing you have been to us. May St. Francis continue to inspire us to live like he did! - *Waren Tsafa*



## Sister Cristina Completes Course in Pastoral Care

We congratulate Sister Cristina Soyao who has successfully completed the Clinical Pastoral Education Course. She remarked that this experience taught her so much about her true self, and that it also taught her how to listen to other people's stories without judgment, to sit with discomfort, and to be a calming presence allowing people to recognize God who is already in their midst. Sister is now ministering as an Associate Chaplain at St. Joseph Medical Center in Joliet, IL.



## Associate Cathy Velcich Receives Bishop Quarter Award

Congratulations to Associate Cathy Velcich for receiving the Bishop Quarter Award for service to the Archdiocese of Chicago. The award is named after Bishop William Quarter, the first Bishop of Chicago, and is given to a lay Catholic who consistently serves the Archdiocese and Vicariates' ministries. Cathy has served the Archdiocese in a great variety of positions, boards, and committees. One award is given per Vicariate each year. It is given in the spirit of trusting in the Lord's providence for the foundation of the Church.



## *Mass Cards Available for Living and Deceased*

Stop by the Motherhouse Front Desk 10:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m. or call 815.469.4895. Several designs are available.

## 7th Annual Golf Outing a Success

On August 2, a very successful 7th Annual Golf Outing was held at the George W. Dunne National in Oak Forest, IL. One hundred golfers enjoyed 18 holes, games, and contests at this nationally recognized course after which they mixed and mingled with fellow golfers over dinner. The day was rounded out with some great raffle prizes and a silent auction full of autographed memorabilia and more.





## Fraternitas 2024: Blessings of Goodness



*Sr. Mary Elizabeth Imler, General Community Minister, with Vallerie Wonders, Director of Development*

On September 28, angels wafted among the 80 guests who gathered in the Motherhouse auditorium for Fraternitas 2024 "Blessings of Goodness." In celebration of the Feast of the Archangels (September 29), Archangel Gabriel welcomed all with a colorful array of appetizers. Under Archangel Michael's wings, guests enjoyed a leisurely contemplative walk. Nearby, Sister Joyce Shanabarger extended Archangel Raphael's healing blessing to all with open hearts. A delicious homemade meal was prepared by our dietary staff, and Vallerie Wonders was appreciated for creating this amazing, angelic event.

"We would like to thank all who donated and/or joined us for our Fraternitas fundraiser," said Vallerie Wonders, Director of Development. "It was a special evening, and we are truly grateful for your generosity. We hope you enjoyed the experience, if you were able to join us, and we look forward to seeing you again next year."



## 10th National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis, IN



*Sister Maria with the Archbishop of Indianapolis, Charles Thompson (former USCCB Liaison for Vocations) and from NRVC, Sister Debbie Borneman, sscm, and Ms. Maureen Cetera*

Sister Maria Brizuela had the privilege of attending the historic gathering of 55,000+ devout Catholics at the National Eucharistic Congress (NEC) in Indianapolis, IN, from July 17-21, 2024. Every state was represented with diversity at its finest and a multi-generational presence evident. The entire event was Spirit-filled as people gathered to praise and worship God through song.

Sister reflected: "My heart was overwhelmed and humbled as I witnessed the outpouring of love for the Eucharist as young and old gathered to celebrate and share their faith with people who once were strangers and now had embraced one another as family."



## Associates in Memoriam



**Joann Toti**  
Associate for  
nearly 7 years  
Rockford/  
Aurora Circle



**Carol De Trana**  
Associate for  
nearly 23 years  
California Circle



**SEASON  
OF CREATION  
CELEBRATION**  
*with Blessing of Pets*



We celebrated the Season of Creation from September 1 to October 4, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi. During that Season, we took time to renew our relationship with our Creator God and all of creation. In honor of the Season, we daily prayed a General Intercession asking that we be faithful stewards of creation, wisely caring for Mother Earth and all of creation. We concluded the Season on October 6 with a blessing of pets and items made from the earth's resources.

## Gym Demolished

On June 11, our 69-year-old gym was demolished. In its early days it was used by Sacred Heart High School students. In more recent years it housed the treasures for our past garage sales and was the starting line of the sale on opening morning.



*A crowd lines up next to the gym to be let in to the Sisters' historic, giant garage sale.*

## Jubilee 2025 "Pilgrims of Hope"

2025 will be a Jubilee Year, or Holy Year, in the Catholic Church, which is a year dedicated to celebration, forgiveness, and renewal. During the year, Rome will welcome pilgrims from all over the world who come to celebrate this special occasion.

Pope Francis stated in his letter announcing the Jubilee 2025: "We

must fan the flame of hope that has been given us and help everyone to gain new strength and certainty by looking to the future with an open spirit, a trusting heart, and far-sighted vision. The forthcoming Jubilee can contribute greatly to restoring a climate of hope and trust as a prelude to the renewal and rebirth that we so urgently desire..." The Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica is only opened during a jubilee year. It will be opened on December 24, 2024, to signal the beginning of the Year of Jubilee. On January 5, 2025, we will inaugurate the Jubilee Year with a special prayer service at 2:00 p.m. in our chapel. All are welcome!



*The last wall of the gym comes down.*

## Free Annual Christmas Event Offered December 15



During our annual "Franciscan Christmas" we will be stargazing on our brilliant Christmas star, St. Francis of Assisi! Especially dear to Francis' heart was the Incarnation, God becoming one of us. His greatest desire was to live the humility and poverty of the Babe of Bethlehem. During our gathering, we will share stories from Francis' life that show how he lived like Jesus and

brought Jesus to life so that we might be inspired to do the same. Join us on December 15 at 4:00 p.m. as part of your preparation for the celebration of Christmas.



### **PORTIUNCULA Center for Prayer** *Retreat and Holistic Center*

For complete program and registration information, go to: <https://www.portforprayer.org> or call 815.464.3880.  
Email: [info@portforprayer.org](mailto:info@portforprayer.org)

TEILHARD, EINSTEIN, AND THE SPIRITUAL QUEST via Zoom - 11/09/2024 - 9:30 AM - 11:15 AM

A MINDFULNESS HOUR FOCUSED ON GRATITUDE via Zoom - 11/11/2024 - 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM

THE BOOK OF JOY: LASTING HAPPINESS IN A CHANGING WORLD - 11/12/2024 - 9:30 AM - 12:00 PM

FINDING HOPE AND HEALING YOUR HEART - 12/03/2024 - 9:30 AM - 12:00 PM

PRIVATE RETREAT DAY – A WEARY WORLD REJOICES - 12/09/2024 - 9:30 AM - 3:30 PM

THE WOMAN AT THE WELL - 12/10/2024 - 9:30 AM - 12:00 PM

PRAYING WITH COLOR - 01/07/2025 - 9:30 AM - 12:00 PM



JOIN US FOR A FUN-FILLED MORNING  
FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!

# *Santamental* **CHRISTMAS**

**SANTA . SNACKS. CRAFTS  
CAROLS . PUPS. GOODIES**

**DEC  
7**

**FREE  
EVENT**

**9AM –  
1PM**

Franciscan Sisters Motherhouse  
9201 W. St. Francis Rd. – Frankfort, IL 60423

- Pictures with Santa & the Christmas Pups
- Hot Cocoa and Snacks
- Make Reindeer Food
- Around the World Nativities
- Hear a Holiday Story
- Listen to Carolers
- Gift bags for kids and more...

**REGISTER ONLINE AT  
[FSSH.NET/GIVE](http://FSSH.NET/GIVE)**





FRANCISCAN SISTERS OF THE SACRED HEART

9201 W. St. Francis Road ♦ Frankfort, IL 60423



## *Happy Holidays!*

**November 28: Thanksgiving Mass 9:30 AM**

**December 1: First Sunday of Advent**

**December 7: A Santamental Christmas, 9:00 AM—1 PM**

**December 15: A Franciscan Christmas: "St. Francis, Our Christmas Star" at 4:00 PM**

**December 24: 4:00 PM Christmas Eve Mass with carols at 3:40 PM**

**December 25: 9:30 AM Christmas Day Mass**

**January 1: Solemnity of Mary 9:30 AM**

**January 5: Jubilee 2025 Prayer Service, 2:00 PM**