

Volume 16.2 Summer 2013

Good NEWS

A Publication of  THE SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS OF PHILADELPHIA

Sacrifice and Support: *Charity Begins at Home*

Also in this issue:

- The Amazing Power of One
- People & Places
- Foundation Annual Report

Commitment Statement

We recommit ourselves to “rebuilding the Church” by living the passion of the Gospel in the discerning spirit of our Franciscan charism and tradition.

We are willing to take the necessary risks to be a healing, compassionate presence in our violent world especially with women, children, and those who have no voice.

We desire to reflect this commitment in our dialogue with the entire Church, in our own governing structures, and in our relationship with one another as sister.

Mission Statement

We, the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, choose to live the Gospel in the prophetic spirit of Francis of Assisi and our Foundress Mother Francis Bachmann. With Jesus Christ as Brother, we live as sister with one another, with the entire human family and with all creation. Calling ourselves and one another to continuous conversion of heart, we commit ourselves to a life of contemplation, poverty and humility.

As vowed women of the Church, we respond with diverse gifts in a spirit of collaboration and of mutual service to the needs of others, especially the economically poor, the marginal and the oppressed. Seeking to participate in the Spirit's action in the world, we direct our personal and corporate resources to the promotion of justice, peace, and reconciliation.

Filled with trust in the goodness of God, we move forward.

POINT OF VIEW

The Art of Generous Giving

For centuries St. Francis of Assisi has been one of the world's best known and recognized saints. On March 13, 2013, he became the subject of renewed interest when Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio, the newly elected pope, chose the name Francis. In explaining his choice, Pope Francis highlighted St. Francis' love for those who are poor, his respect for creation, his thirst for peacemaking, and his capacity to see all of God's creatures as brother and sister. In interviews, the newly elected pope captured the essence of Franciscan spirituality: the importance of relationship and the interconnectedness of all creation. St. Francis lived out these values, not in a monastery as was customary in his day, but amidst the people in the marketplace of his time.



**Sister Esther Anderson, OSF
Congregational Minister**

In this Good News, we get a glimpse of small parish life in Kentucky where Sister Marie Colette Gerry ministers. Because the parish has been without a full-time priest for years, she is responsible for the day-to-day activities, working in the midst of the people and available to them when needed. She assists the parishioners in their faith development and in their outreach to others while taking care of the practical matters of the parish's property and finances. Parishioners perceive her to be the glue that holds all together while she spreads seeds to grow relationships and move the parish in the right direction.

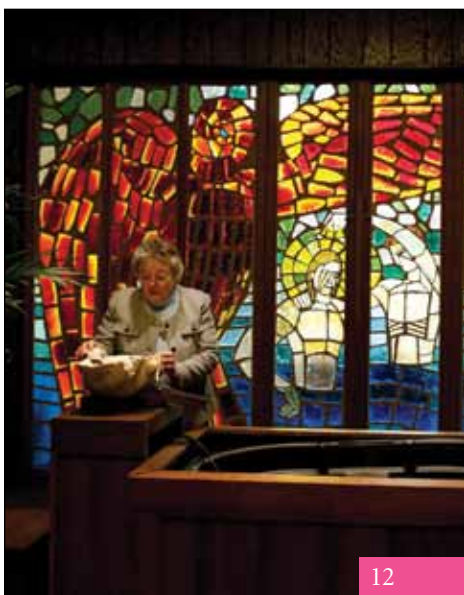
Many people in the United States today are primary caregivers for aged parents. They engage in this responsibility, often while caring for young children and working to support their families. In this edition, we focus on our sisters who are caregivers to family members. Some engage in this critical ministry on a full-time basis while others juggle it with other ministerial and community commitments. The stories of Sisters Marie Inez Gonzales and Theresa Kevin Donahue are a microcosm of the other sisters' realities. They live out our core value of relationship sustained by their relationship with God, family, and community.

These Good News stories attest to the fact that generous giving seems to replenish itself—as more is given, more is received. Peace and all good!

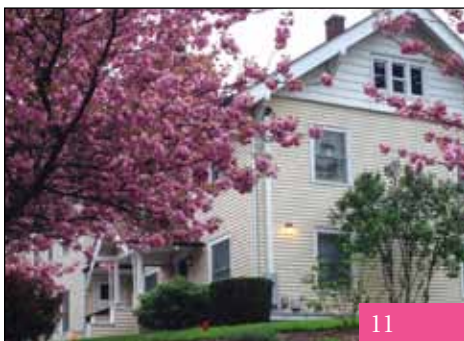
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Caring for a family member can be a difficult and demanding task but Sisters Marie Inez Gonzales and Theresa Kevin Donahue do not go it alone. With loving support from their families and the Sisters of St. Francis, the sisters find joy and a renewed spirit of God in their ministry.

Written by Deb Litman
Photography by Tim LaBarge

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Saints John and Elizabeth Parish in rural Kentucky is thriving—in part due to Sister Marie Colette Gerry who serves as parish life director. Because the parish is without a full-time priest, Sister Colette is responsible for the day-to-day activities, providing for adult education, overseeing faith formation, and heading the RCIA process in addition to being the spiritual guiding force.

Written by Deb Litman
Photography by Andrea Cipriani-Mecchi

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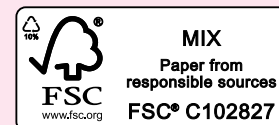
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The purpose of *Good News* is to further the Gospel mission of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia by sharing the good news of the congregation with our friends, family, companions, and sisters. Through this publication, we hope to share the charism of our congregation and invite others to become involved in our mission.

Good News is published three times a year (spring, summer, winter) by the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia. We welcome your feedback and comments; correspondence should be addressed to *Good News* at address above.

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On the cover: Sister Marie Inez Gonzales shares a tender moment with her sister Sylvia who has Down's syndrome and Alzheimer's. At 79 years old, Sister Marie Inez is one of 40 million Americans who are caring for ill and aging family members. Marie Inez serves as primary caregiver not only for Sylvia, but also for her 99-year old mother who suffers from dementia.



Sister Marie Inez does more than simply care for Sylvia and her mother physically. She makes sure that they engage their minds, nourish their spirits, and know that they are loved.



Creating safe and comfortable lives for Sylvia and her mother keeps Sister Marie Inez very busy. She bathes, dresses, and exercises the two women; dispenses their medication; prepares their meals; and keeps the house in order.

Sacrifice *and* Support: *Charity Begins at Home*

✠ “I COULDN’T DO THIS WITHOUT MY FAMILY
AND THE SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS BEHIND ME.”



Assistance from other family members makes it possible to give her loved ones the care that they require. Sister Marie Inez acknowledges the importance and security of being cared for by family first.

Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays start early for 79-year-old Sister Marie Inez Gonzales. Up at 5:45 A.M., she dresses, makes breakfast, packs her lunch, and sets out on the 15 mile drive to the dialysis center where she receives treatments from 10-1. Upon returning home, she rests to regain her strength for the evening. Then at 5:30 P.M., she takes over as the primary caregiver for her 99-year-old mother who suffers from dementia and her 59-year-old sister

Sylvia who has Down’s syndrome and Alzheimer’s. On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, Sister Marie Inez’s caregiving duties begin earlier—at noon—and continue through the next morning.

Sister Marie Inez bathes and dresses the two women, cooks their meals, and takes them for short walks when the weather is nice. She calms them when they are upset, grounds them when they become disoriented, and tries to involve them in engaging activities. It is not an easy job. In addition

to the physical demands of caring for two disabled adults, the work presents emotional stresses that also can take their toll. There are times when the two women lash out in anger and frustration. Sylvia sometimes sees things that aren’t there and becomes frightened and agitated. Her mother sometimes wanders the house at night, awakening Sylvia and Marie Inez. “I sleep on the couch in the living room between their two bedrooms so I can hear them if they call out,” said Sister Marie Inez.



Several months ago Sylvia received the wrong medicine from the pharmacy and had a bad reaction to it. “I couldn’t hold her down,” said Sister Marie Inez. “She was flailing her arms and legs and my mom was screaming at me because she was scared. I called the paramedics and they took her to the emergency room.”

Even on good days, the women can be difficult to handle. Sylvia is fearful of sitting in chairs, climbing onto a doctor’s table, or getting into the car. “She has a balance

problem so she is afraid that she is going to fall,” said Sister Marie Inez. “Once she gets stubborn, I can’t move her so I have to find a way to convince her to move herself.”

Fortunately Sister Marie Inez is not going it alone. The assistance of other family members and the support of her community are what make it possible to give her loved ones the care they need. When she is at dialysis, her two blood sisters, her niece and grand-niece, and two part-time paid workers care for Sylvia and her mother. “It takes a family

to care for our two special ladies and I think they feel very safe and secure being taken care of by family first,” said Sister Marie Inez. “I couldn’t do this without my family and the Sisters of St. Francis behind me.”

Among the 40 Million

It wasn’t always possible for women in religious life to serve as primary caregivers for their parents and siblings. “Years ago, if a sister went to take care of a family

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As associate director of pastoral services for the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, Sister Anne Dorice DeFebbo cares for the caregivers in the community. She supports those sisters tending to family members in many ways—from helping to make arrangements for respite care to sending notes of encouragement.

“TODAY WE SEE THE MINISTRY OF CAREGIVING AS CONSISTENT WITH OUR CHARISM OF RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING AND JUSTICE.”

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 member, she had to take a leave of absence from the congregation,” explained Sister Anne Dorice DeFebbo who serves as associate director of pastoral services for the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia. “Today we see the ministry of caregiving as consistent with our charism of relationship-building and justice. Since 1989 we have had a policy that sisters can be missioned to caregiving for a family member.”

Currently sixteen sisters are missioned to caregiving. Some tend to loved ones full-time; others juggle the responsibilities of an additional ministry as well. “It is a microcosm of what is happening in U.S. society as a whole,” said Sister Anne Dorice. “AARP estimates that there are 40 million unpaid caregivers in the U.S. today. We are a part of that group.”

A sister considering full- or part-time caregiving to a family member first contacts a member of the congregation’s leadership team to share her request. The leadership person then may recommend that the sister begin a reflection process to clarify the needs of the person in need of care, the sister herself, and other members of the sister’s family. To help with that process, Sister Anne Dorice provides a booklet to guide discernment. It encourages dialogue among family members and directs reflection on how the sister’s relationship with the sisters with whom she lives and with others in the congregation can best be maintained and nurtured. “Sisters must carefully consider what they are undertaking,” said Sister Anne Dorice. “There needs to be a delicate balance between self, congregation, and family.”

Sister Anne knows first-hand how challenging being a caregiver can be. She was a caregiver on two separate occasions during her years in ministry. Together with two family members, she cared for her father for two years after he suffered a stroke. Sister Anne took the night-shift while also working full-time as a nursing instructor. Ten years later she spent two years caring for her mother who had been diagnosed with cancer and congestive heart and lung failure. Now Sister Anne’s ministry allows her to act as a consultant to sisters in the same situation. For those sisters who ultimately take on the demanding role of caregiver, Sister Anne and the congregation



Sister Theresa Kevin had her hands full in October 2012, when Hurricane Sandy hit Margate, New Jersey, where she and her mother live. In addition to her regular duties, Sister Theresa had to deal with overseeing home repairs after her garage and crawl space were filled with water.



Sister Theresa Kevin administers eye drops to her mother who has macular degeneration. She also makes sure her mother takes her many other medicines each day and schedules and transports her to doctors’ appointments regularly.



"My mother has been through so much but through it all she retains her cheerful disposition," said Sister Theresa Kevin Donahue. "For me, caring for her is a blessing that God and my community have given me."

serve as a vital support system. Sister Anne Dorice works with each sister on a case-by-case basis to decide how much involvement the sister wants or needs from the congregation. She also helps caregivers in need of respite care to connect with services available within their local community. Occasionally sisters are able to bring their female family member to Assisi House, the congregation's retirement residence, to be cared for while they make retreat or take a much-needed break.

Sister Anne Dorice not only helps with the practical side of things. She also provides regular encouragement and assistance to caregivers, buoying their spirits with phone calls, emails, and care packages. With the help of volunteer, Sister Jacinta Brazil, Sister Anne sends birthday cards and holiday cards to the caregivers, occasionally enclosing a few dollars to help offset some

of the out-of-pocket expenses the caregivers face. She is also there to help sisters work through the more emotional aspects of the role of caregiver, coaching them in empathic listening and helping them navigate the relationship with a family member who may be struggling with a loss of independence.

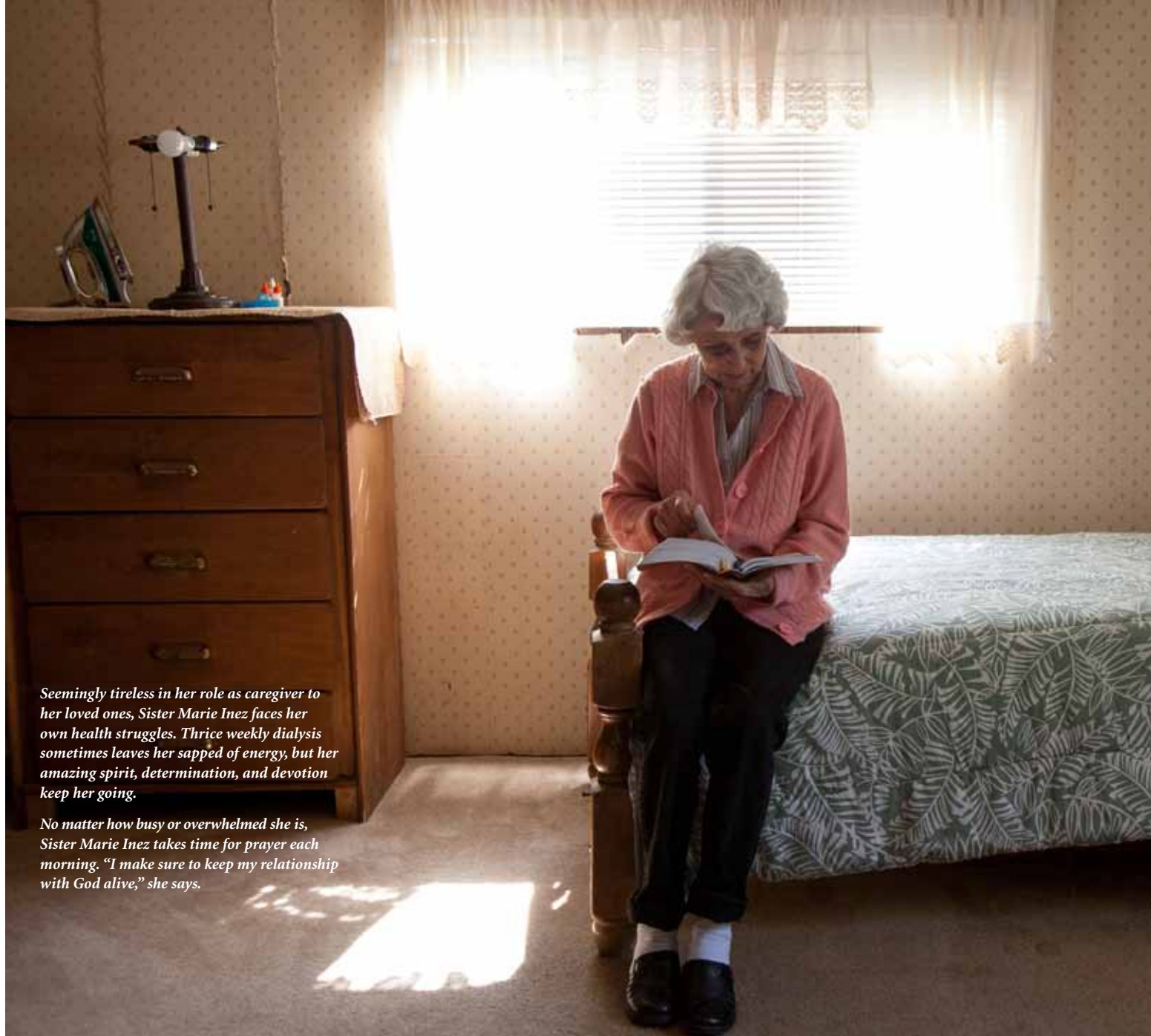
Dealing with Diminishment

Sister Theresa Kevin Donahue understands well what it means to help loved ones come to terms with diminishing abilities. She was still teaching first grade when she began helping her mother care for her father who was wheelchair bound with heart problems and diabetes. After Mr. Donahue's death in 2001, Mrs. Donahue herself suffered a number of health setbacks. Macular degeneration has left her completely blind in one eye and only partially sighted in the other.

Fibromyalgia, torn rotator cuffs, broken hips, and heart problems have caused her additional pain and limited her activities. Having cared for her mother full-time since 2008, Sister Theresa Kevin said, "The biggest struggle is seeing her decline, seeing her in pain, and being unable to make her comfortable. I think sometimes she gets depressed because she can't do all she used to do."

Sister Theresa Kevin encourages her mother to continue doing the things she enjoys like working the puzzles from the newspaper, watching Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN), and going out to lunch. She does what she can to keep her mother as independent as possible, getting her a special magnifying glass with a light so she can read newspapers and menus by herself. "Through it all, my mom perseveres and

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Seemingly tireless in her role as caregiver to her loved ones, Sister Marie Inez faces her own health struggles. Thrice weekly dialysis sometimes leaves her sapped of energy, but her amazing spirit, determination, and devotion keep her going.

No matter how busy or overwhelmed she is, Sister Marie Inez takes time for prayer each morning. "I make sure to keep my relationship with God alive," she says.

keeps going," Sister Theresa commented. "That is a good reminder for me to thank God for what I have and to go out and enjoy the sunshine."

Time for God, Self, and Sisterhood

Both Sisters Marie Inez and Theresa Kevin say the relationship they have with God helps and sustains them when caregiving gets hard. "One of the things that I built into my schedule is my morning prayer," said Sister Marie Inez. "I am very faithful to that." Sister Theresa agrees. She, too, spends

a good amount of time each morning in prayer and solitude before beginning to care for her mother.

Caregivers must learn to cherish and utilize the unscheduled moments they can find as well. Sister Marie Inez does spiritual reading during dialysis if it is quiet enough and uses the time she is on the road back and forth to dialysis to talk to God. "I make sure that I take the time to keep my relationship with God alive."

"I tell caregivers how important it is for them to carve out time for the things that support their own well-being," said

Sister Anne Dorice. "I tell them to respect their own feelings, to find respite care, to ask for help, and to tell others what they need."

Marie Inez takes Sundays off when she can but her biological sister who usually takes that shift has been unable to help lately because of health problems of her own. Still she makes the most of the free time she does have. "I take time for myself when possible," said Sister Marie Inez. "I get out when I can. I garden. I read. Those are the things that help get my mind away and keep me from getting run down."



Maintaining ties with people outside of the caregiving environment can also be an incredible boost to mind and spirit. Sister Anne Dorice recommends that sisters who are caregivers share their stories with the congregation and stay involved with sisters in their area.

“My connection with my community and my relationship with the sisters give me support and keep me from feeling isolated,” said Sister Theresa Kevin. “I get together with other sisters from the congregation in my area. We talk about what is going on with each other. They ask how mom is doing. It gives me a sense of sisterhood.”

HOW YOU CAN HELP...

- Keep the ill and infirm as well as those who care for them in your daily prayers.
- If you are a caregiver, take time to recharge. Try to get regular exercise, set aside a few minutes of quiet time each day, and do your best to get enough sleep.
- Offer to provide respite care for a caregiver. Having a few hours alone to run errands, visit with friends, or take part in a favorite activity can be enormously refreshing for those who spend their days and nights caring for others.
- Sometimes general offers to help can be difficult for people to accept. Try offering specific assistance—picking up items from the grocery store, providing a meal, or mowing the lawn.
- Keep in touch. Call the caregiver on the phone to check in. Better yet, bring over coffee and doughnuts and stay to talk. Contact with the outside world can lift a caregiver’s spirits.

Many the Struggles but Many the Gifts

Franciscan connections help in other ways as well. “I think as Franciscans we have always been about mutuality and respect for the human person,” said Sister Anne Dorice. “Those same values and skills—attentive listening, skilled communication, shared responsibility, careful relationship building—are important as a caregiver.”

Indeed, sisters often find that skills honed in their other ministries are of great value in their new role as caregiver. “To be a caregiver, you have to have lots of patience and be able to take things as they come,” said Sister Marie Inez. “That is certainly something I learned from my background as a teacher and a principal. No matter how difficult things got, you could not let it spill over to your behavior in the classroom. Never respond to anger with anger.”

Though the struggles of caregiving are many, the gifts received from such work can be just as great. Knowing that they are providing continuity of love, care, and connection for their loved ones can go a long way in giving strength to caregivers. “Some days it can be draining but it is a

great honor and privilege to be able to care for my mother like she did for me when I was a child,” said Sister Theresa Kevin. “I am grateful that we have this valuable time together.” ■

For more information or comments on this article, contact goodnews@osfphila.org.



PEOPLE & PLACES



The Franciscan Spiritual Center's new home in Milwaukie, Oregon, offers its visitors programs rich in our Franciscan charism.

OREGON

The Franciscan Spiritual Center in Milwaukie has a new home. Although the center's new quarters are just three miles from the previous site, the new location offers many pluses. The house, a former convent of the Sisters of Mercy, is part of St. John the Baptist Parish. The fact that the parish is staffed by Franciscan friars seems an appropriate plus in the center's continued efforts to share the Franciscan charism in its many programs. St. John's Parish is home to 1,800 families. The center has been well received by the church community. And, of course, the spiritual center's regular patrons are looking forward to the new opportunities that this new home will make possible.



PENNSYLVANIA

Our Franciscan Companions in Mission gathered for their annual retreat day in March, traveling from as near as Aston and as far as Portland, Oregon. The presenter for the day was Eileen Flanagan, a professor from Neumann University's department of pastoral and theological studies. Eileen's topic was the 800th anniversary of Clare of Assisi's becoming the first Franciscan woman. She focused on the enormity of Clare's decision in her day and asked the participants to relate it to a major decision that each of them had made. Using the artwork in the tavola of Clare, Eileen outlined various scenes in Clare's life. A new

Who are the 'Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia'?
Through this section we hope to share a glimpse of our congregation and the individuals who make real its mission.

► Companions shared their reflections on where significant incidents in their own lives might be placed in their personal tavolas.



feature of this year's gathering sprang from the realization that there are companions who want to attend the retreat but who are unable to do so because of distance and/or financial constraints. The Companion Advisory Board decided to establish a scholarship fund—and this year's retreat day provided the first step in realizing monies for that fund. A "flea market" table and a raffle provided the first donations to get the fund underway!



The sisters and alumni who participated in the St. Patrick's Day Parade were transported by a school bus bearing the Catechism Kids sign and naming the Catholic schools in Wilmington. Some of the participants rode the bus in the parade while others chose to parade on foot.



DELAWARE

March 16 marked a first for the congregation when 14 of our sisters participated in Wilmington's annual St. Patrick's Day Parade. The idea originated with Philip Leach, vice chair of our foundation board. "My memories of school days are very poignant and I attribute who I am and what I value to my Catholic school teachers," he explained. In order to concretize those memories, Phil started an organization of Catholic school alumni called Catechism Kids. His dream is that graduates of Wilmington diocesan schools will both rekindle friendships and perhaps develop something of an "archive" of memorabilia. The 17 alumni and 14 sisters who participated in the parade were, hopefully, just the beginning. Wilmington has a wealth of ethnic festivals, parades, parish gatherings, and civic events to offer and hopefully Catechism Kids will become a regular feature at many of them.

PENNSYLVANIA

In *Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer speaks of April as the month when people feel called to go on pilgrimage. At Neumann University, however, any month seems to be a good time for both students and staff to undertake these journeys of faith. Last December three students—Jillian DeFina, Rob Triplett, and Christina Perkins—traveled to Rome and Assisi as part of an intercollegiate pilgrimage. Each of them found a particular moment of great significance. For Jillian that experience was the walk memorializing St. Clare's midnight walk from her family's home to join St. Francis and the brothers. Christina appreciated being able to attend the Christmas Mass in Greccio. For Rob that special moment was the opportunity to pray before the original San Damiano crucifix. In March another group of students traveled to Ireland with Sister Linda DeCero—their pilgrimage just one of the many activities commemorating the Year of Faith. And in May, staff members Jim Kain, Natalie Van Wyk, Melissa Kelly, Helen Smith, and Maria Traub, were part of an Assisi pilgrimage. For each of them the experience was, as Maria explained, "an opportunity to go deeper into myself and to open myself to God."



PENNSYLVANIA

When the Sisters of St. Francis founded St. Mary Medical Center in Langhorne 40 years ago, their goal was to build a "City of Healing." Forty years later that dream has grown to include five centers with facilities in neighboring areas. The original 200 person staff has grown to 700 physicians, 3,200 colleagues, and 1,100 volunteers. And the dream continues to flourish. In 2012 St. Mary's topped the list in three categories of Greater Philadelphia Media's Job Trends Best Places to Work: Best Hospital, Best Employer for Entry Level, and Best Employer Overall in Pennsylvania. This year the center completed the second phase of its emergency department and trauma center expansion. During National Hospital Week in May, the medical center held various events



Christina Perkins, Rob Triplett, and Julian DeFina visited the Vatican as part of their pilgrimage.

to celebrate the 40 years of living out the original dream and the dedication of its staff. You can watch a video that encapsulates our history with St. Mary's on our Youtube channel: www.youtube.com/user/SrsofStFrancisPhila.



IRELAND

In 2008 *Good News* featured the work done by Sisters Patricia Kidd and Carmel Earls at the Carline Centre of Learning in Dublin. This year the center is celebrating its 20th anniversary and is noted as a safe place—a learning place—for troubled youth. Today the center offers two programs. The main program provides courses in communication, math, IT, English, drama, life skills, relationship building, and sexuality education. In addition, students can be part of the "Copping On Program"; day trips; a transnational program; a job training program; and vocational training in woodwork, mechanics, food/nutrition services, and arts and crafts. The Access Program provides opportunities for young people with behavioral problems and who might be dealing with drug-related issues. In addition, the Carline Centre offers support and counseling to the students' families and makes efforts to maintain contact with those who have completed the program. They also provide services to people who are homeless: meals, referral services, and access to laundry facilities. Sisters Carmel and Patricia both serve on the Carline Board of Management.

WYOMING

For the past 20 years, Sr. Teresa Frawley has served parishioners of the two churches on the Wind River Reservation—St. Joseph's Church in Ethete and Blessed Sacrament Church in Washakie. Referring to her travel to the two churches and her work with various groups throughout the 1,800,000 acre reservation, a recent issue of the *Wind River Rendezvous* commented: "Every week Sister Teresa drives more miles—in all kinds of weather—than some people do in a month or more." Sister Teresa is a pastoral assistant and religious education coordinator who teaches, prepares parishioners for the reception of the sacraments, and oversees the cleaning and set up of various parish facilities. She also visits the elderly and sick members of both congregations. Her dedication and hard work are the driving force behind the volunteer service she inspires in others.

Because of her concern for the environment, Sister Teresa Frawley devotes time to caring for the grounds around the churches, planting flowers and trees, and tending her garden.



At the conclusion of Mass at Saints John and Elizabeth Church, Sister Colette Gerry reminds the congregation about upcoming parish events and activities.



The Amazing Power of One

Music fills the air and people fill the pews on Sunday mornings at Saints John and Elizabeth Church in Grayson, Kentucky. Guitar, piano, and vocals enrich the service—from the meditative mood of the reflection to the more upbeat vibe of the closing recessional. When it is time for the lively refrains of the recessional, the musicians invite the young and the young at heart to come to the front of

the church to join in the music making. A good number respond—with children and adults alike coming forward to pick up tambourines or maracas.

“It is such a joyful way to celebrate Mass on Sunday,” said Sister Marie Colette Gerry who serves as parish life director at Saints John and Elizabeth. “When visitors come to celebrate the liturgy with us on Sunday, all of them comment on the wonderful music.”

The vibrancy of the music is a tangible display of the vitality of this small parish nestled in the northeastern part of Kentucky. The church, with its 50 families, draws from Grayson as well as other rural communities in the area where less than one half of one percent of the population is Catholic. The parish was founded in 1964 by the Glenmary Home Missioners along with a handful of Catholics whom they located by knocking



Sister Colette Gerry

“IT IS SO IMPORTANT FOR SMALL GROUPS OF CATHOLICS TO HAVE THAT SENSE OF COMMUNITY. DOING THINGS TOGETHER HELPS US MOLD TOGETHER AS A COMMUNITY.”

on doors. The first Mass was celebrated in the home of a local doctor. Within a few weeks, a trailer was donated and services were held there until a house was purchased for the purpose. Eventually the current church was built. Today the church sits next to a parish hall which houses four classrooms and a communal meeting space.

Wearing Many Hats

Like many rural parishes, Saints John and Elizabeth has been without a full-time priest for years. Right now, Glenmary Father Dave Glockner serves as sacramental minister and celebrates the liturgy on Sundays, Mondays, and Wednesdays. Sister Colette has been at the parish since 2008. She is responsible for day-to-day activities, providing for adult education, overseeing faith formation, and heading the RCIA process. In addition to being the spiritual guiding force, Sister Colette is responsible for the practical matters of the parish's property and finances.

“I can't say enough about Sister Colette,” said parishioner Mary Lou Riffe who has been attending church at the parish since its days in the trailer. “She has brought a lot to our church. She is always right there for anyone who needs her. She gets the children interested and involved. She visits with everyone before Mass and greets newcomers warmly. I just love her.”

Seeding the Future

Despite its small size, Saints John and Elizabeth boasts sixteen children in its faith formation program. “Colette is so good with the children,” said parish council president Carolyn Bowe. “She really talks with them, gets to know what is going on in their lives. She anticipates what they are going to need even before they need it.”

“It is hard to be Catholic in this area, especially for young people,” said Sister Colette. “Many of the activities for young people center around other churches' youth groups. Our two teenagers are both the only Catholics in their schools.”

That is why Sister Colette encouraged the two girls to attend the Catholic Heart Work Camp held in South Carolina this past year. The girls were able to raise the needed funds to attend the camp and came back with a renewed enthusiasm and commitment to their faith. “The experience was a real boon for them,” said Sister Colette. “Just seeing that there are lots of young Catholics their age out there and getting the chance to work, pray, and play together was life-changing.”

Fruits of Hospitality

In addition to teaching and encouraging the young people in the parish, Sister Colette welcomes and guides adults who are new to the faith. “Every year since I have arrived, there has been at least one adult in RCIA,” said Sister Colette. “It is wonderful to see the Church growing little-by-little.”

One such newcomer is Diva Justice who has been coming to Saints John and Elizabeth Church for nearly three years.

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Newcomer Diva Justice checks in with her granddaughter, Daniela, who is making a birthday card for Sister Colette. With only sixteen children in the parish, Sister Colette is able to get to know each child personally. “The children love Sister Colette,” said Diva. “She makes sure they can relate to what is going on at church and she makes sure they are always learning.”



With community a priority for parishioners at Saints John and Elizabeth, members gather regularly after Mass to share food and fellowship. On this particular Sunday, parishioners throw a surprise birthday luncheon for Sister Colette. Many people arrive with homemade goodies and the focus this week is Sister Colette's big day.



Catharine Legg teaches the kindergarten Sunday school class. As one of only two teen members of the church and the only Catholic at her school, Catharine knows how important it is to be a good role model for the younger children in the parish.

Sister Colette prays with a group of parishioners. For many members, Sister Colette is the heart and soul of this close-knit faith community in rural Grayson, Kentucky.



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She first started attending with her son and his fiancée, a Hispanic Catholic who was attracted to the parish because of its periodic Spanish Masses and small but active group of Hispanic families.

“We all felt comfortable right away,” said Diva who was raised Episcopalian. “I started talking to Sister Colette and she was so welcoming and open.” When Diva decided to become Catholic, Sister Colette walked with her through the entire process. “If it had not been for her, I’m not sure I would have felt as connected to the church. She is cheerful and easy to talk to. She provokes me to think deeply about my spirituality.”

Moving Beyond Church Walls

The tightly knit congregation at Saints John and Elizabeth doesn’t just pray

together. They take the time to play together as well. Mary Lou Riffe bakes and brings a cake every Sunday to encourage people to stay after Mass to socialize. “In our church a lot of people live out in the country,” said Mary Lou. “Sundays are the time we get to meet and talk. We share what is going on in our lives and enjoy each other’s company.”

On Sunday afternoons, Carolyn Bowe and her two sisters cook dinner in the parish hall and invite members of the church to share a meal. “Our idea was that everyone would feel welcome and I think they do,” said Carolyn. “The dinners are full of fun and fellowship and lots of laughter. If we don’t have dinner together, it feels like the week is not complete.”

This past year the parish started a group called Roamin’ Catholics that plans a

social activity open to all parishioners each month. Those involved have gone to a poetry reading at a nearby university, a play at the local community college, a showing of a classic Christmas film, and an exhibit at an art museum in the region. “It is so important for small groups of Catholics to have that sense of community,” said Sister Colette. “Doing things together helps us mold together as a community.”

Practicing Charity

But church members don’t just look within their own walls. A strong outreach effort gets lots of support from the parishioners. Each month the church’s social concerns committee identifies needs and the parish donates the items to different organizations in the county.



Music is an integral part of the service at Saints John and Elizabeth. Everyone from skilled musicians to children with tambourines help celebrate with song on Sunday mornings.



Sister Collette is known for visiting with parishioners before Mass and greeting newcomers so warmly that they feel at home almost immediately.

They have collected socks and shirts for the Family Resource Center; food for the children's backpack program; diapers, toothbrushes, baby wipes, and napkins for the women's resource center and Head Start Program; baby bottles for the Two Hearts Pregnancy Center; food for the local food pantry; and toys and stocking stuffers for Project Merry Christmas. In addition to contributions from congregants, donations from sister churches and outside benefactors help meet the needs of the local area.

Parishioners who need assistance can find it as well. A fund exists to help pay for medicine, heating bills, and gasoline and Sister Colette and parish secretary Anne Collinsworth make referrals for people in need of outside services. Since the recession they have doubled the number of families they help.

Holding a Steady Course

After nearly five decades of being served by the Glenmary Home Missioners, the parish recently transitioned into the care of the Diocese of Lexington. With the arrival of a new diocesan priest, the Glenmary fathers will no longer be associated with the parish. To everyone's relief, Sister Colette is staying on to provide consistency.

"Colette is the glue that keeps everything together," said Diva. "She has so much knowledge, so many resources. She encourages us to keep growing and not get stagnant. With a small congregation, it could easily dwindle away but she keeps us all moving in the right direction." ■

For more information or comments on this article, contact goodnews@osfphila.org.

HOW YOU CAN HELP...

- Pray for those in parish ministry and for the members of small parishes who go the extra mile to keep their congregations thriving.
- Use your gifts to enhance your own faith community. Whether your talents lie in music, art, finance, or cooking, they can be used to bring vitality to your place of worship. Lead a song, paint a mural, bake a cake, or balance a checkbook—your time and talents can make a big difference to a congregation of any size.
- Share your faith with the next generation by becoming a religious education teacher.
- If you live in an area with a strong Catholic presence, consider hosting a group of teenagers from an area with a smaller Catholic population. Having the opportunity to be part of an energetic group of Catholics can go a long way toward helping young people feel less alone.

Father Jay Von Hnadorf leads the congregation around the church's grounds with palms. People play music and sing as they enter the church for Mass.



SHARING THE GOOD NEWS



Everyone has within a piece of good news.

— Anne Frank (adapted)

See more good news at www.osfphila.org

▶ To walk through these doors is to accept the possibility of new life. For 25 years St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter has provided and continues to provide emergency shelter for those who are homeless.

▶ Thanks to the generosity of our donors, a new bus has been purchased for Assisi House. Now our retired sisters ride in a safe, comfortable vehicle to and from their various appointments.



With sincere appreciation, The Sisters of St. Francis

Thank You

for your continued support. Without your generosity, we could not respond to the many needs of our brothers and sisters.

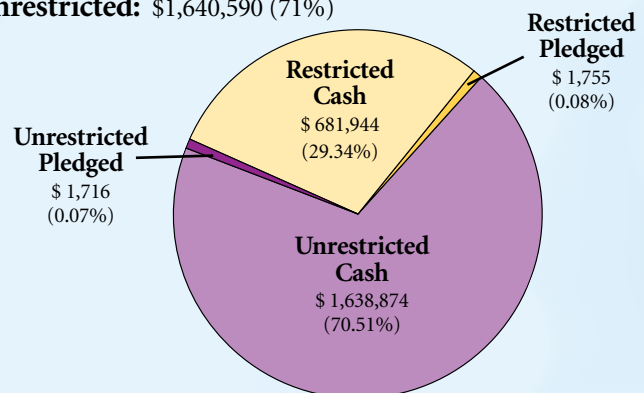
2012 Annual Report— Sisters of St. Francis Foundation

This year's annual report is another example of your generous support of our ministries. Know that we count you among our blessings and we continue to pray for you and all you hold dear. This report shows how your donations have been distributed.

Total Donations: \$ 2,324,289

Restricted: \$683,699 (29%)

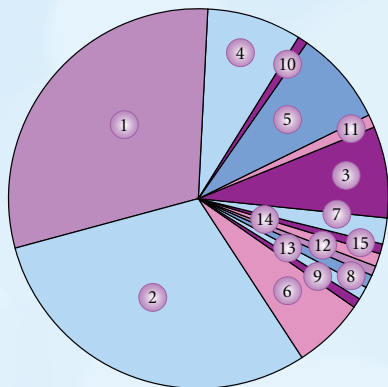
Unrestricted: \$1,640,590 (71%)



Sources of Donations: Raffle, Golf Outing, Direct Mail Appeals, *Good News*, E-News, Memorial Gifts, Memorial Cards, Grants, Recurring Gifts, Website Donations, Estates and Inheritances, and Capital Campaign Pledges.

The Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia assume operational costs of the foundation.

Distribution of Ministry: Unrestricted \$ 1,640,590



- 1 Retirement Fund \$ 500,000 (30.48%)
- 2 Sisters of St. Francis General Fund \$ 490,000 (29.87%)
- 3 Undistributed \$ 125,590 (7.66%)
- 4 St. Joseph Family Center \$ 125,000 (7.62%)
- 5 TCHS \$ 125,000 (7.62%)
- 6 Neumann University \$ 100,000 (6.10%)
- 7 Anna's Place \$ 26,500 (1.62%)
- 8 Drexel Neumann Academy \$ 23,000 (1.40%)
- 9 Mother Seton Academy \$ 23,000 (1.40%)
- 10 Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center \$ 23,000 (1.40%)
- 11 Transitions \$ 23,000 (1.40%)
- 12 St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter \$ 20,000 (1.22%)
- 13 Franciscan Spiritual Center-Aston \$ 20,000 (1.22%)
- 14 Murphy Initiative for Justice and Peace \$ 10,000 (0.61%)
- 15 Haiti Relief Collaboration \$ 6,500 (0.40%)

◀ *The Sisters of St. Francis have partnered with the Sylvania Franciscan Sisters to help rebuild the land of Haiti. Our Haitian brothers and sisters are most grateful for your support.*



In Memoriam

Mary Berard D'Amato
February 23, 2013

Sister Henry Wyatt
March 2, 2013

Sister Grace Pierre Forrester
March 19, 2013

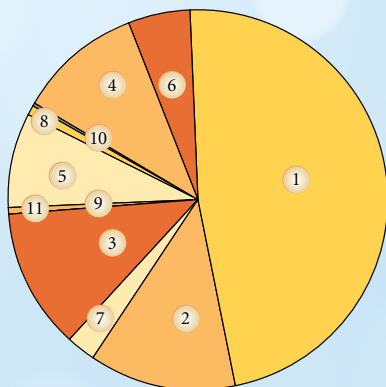
Sister Regina Dengler
(formerly Sister John Ignatius)
April 3, 2013

Sister Clare Naughton
(formerly Sister Clarence)
April 7, 2013

Sister Marita Francis Barrington
April 27, 2013

Sister Marie Kramer
(formerly Sister Clare Albertine)
May 13, 2013

Distribution of Ministry: Restricted \$ 683,699



- 1 Assisi House \$ 323,687 (47.34%)
- 2 Shelter & Social Ministries \$ 87,060 (12.73%)
- 3 TCHS \$ 81,248 (11.88%)
- 4 General Retirement Fund \$ 73,392 (10.73%)
- 5 Assisi House Bus and Windows \$ 56,385 (8.25%)
- 6 St. Ann Convent \$ 36,063 (5.27%)
- 7 Education \$ 16,416 (2.40%)
- 8 Memorial Garden \$ 4,300 (0.63%)
- 9 Parish Ministries \$ 3,496 (0.51%)
- 10 Foreign Ministries \$ 1,549 (0.23%)
- 11 Spiritual Ministries \$ 103 (0.02%)

Explanation of Restricted Categories

TCHS: The Catholic High School of Baltimore; **Spiritual Ministries:** Franciscan Spiritual Center, Aston; **Parish Ministries:** Sr. Loretta Schaff, St. Anthony Parish (Baltimore), Pastoral Care (Maryland), God's Extravagant Love Program; **Assisi House:** Assisi House Bus, Assisi House Windows; **Memorial Garden:** Trees, Benches, Bricks, and Pergola; **Foreign Ministries:** Africa, Haiti, and Ireland; **Shelter and Social Ministries:** Anna's Place, Child Advocacy, Committee for Responsible Investment (CRI), East Bay Sanctuary, Human Trafficking (Dawn's Place), Hispanic Ministry (Oregon), Intercommunity Peace and Justice (Washington), Peace and Justice Fund, St. Francis House, St. Mary Franciscan Shelter, St. Joseph Family Center, MacDonald Center, Transitions, Discretionary Fund for the Poor; **Education:** Drexel Neumann Academy, Neumann University, Mother Seton Academy, and Villa Maria School.

Therefore, every dollar that our donors give is used solely for the ministries and retirement.

Fooncus

► Sister Jean Strawbridge brings to Anna's Place the many skills she developed during her years ministering as a teacher and business manager. She helps to keep guests informed on local and global issues. Using her heart as well as her senses, she is quick to discern the needs of clients, enabling the staff to befriend those who "drop in" and to offer them needed resources.



SISTER JEAN STRAWBRIDGE, RSM

"SISTER JEAN STRAWBRIDGE IS A WITNESS TO THE MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES OF ANNA'S PLACE."

▼ Sister Jean Strawbridge provides one-on-one assistance in teaching computer skills to approximately 50 students four days a week.



Chance meetings? Very often such meetings are actually moments enriched by the Spirit! Three years ago Sister Jean Strawbridge, RSM, was on sabbatical in New Mexico after having completed 11 years of ministry in the finance office at Mercy Vocational High School in Philadelphia. She met Sister Julie McCole, then director of Anna's Place in Chester, who asked what Sister Jean planned to do after her sabbatical. Sister Julie described Anna's Place, our congregation's sponsored ministry in Chester, and gave Sister Jean a copy of the *Good News* article about the center. In September 2010 Sister Jean visited Anna's Place and quickly signed on as a volunteer. "What drew me was that this is a fairly new ministry," she explained. She was also impressed by the enthusiasm of Sister Julie, Sister Maria Orlandini, and the dedicated group of volunteers as well as by the people from Chester who frequent Anna's Place.

"They remember when life was better in Chester and we encourage them to cooperate to make it new and better again," she explained.

The staff and guests at Anna's Place are equally impressed with Sister Jean's contributions. Sister Jean Rupertus, current director of Anna's Place, described Sister Jean Strawbridge as "a witness to the mission, vision, and values of Anna's Place—hospitable, welcoming, respectful, relational, and empowering. During her 20 hours a week of volunteer service, she is totally focused on each individual person."

That focus is evident whether Sister Jean Strawbridge is teaching computer skills, helping with lunch, socializing with guests during bingo games, engaging in the health and wellness program, or attending staff meetings. As Sister Jean Rupertus explained, "While generously volunteering her time, gifts, and resources, Sister Jean has endeared herself to all our guests and makes vital contributions toward expanding our services to those in need—spiritually, educationally, and socially." Franciscan traits? Certainly! But as Sister Jean Strawbridge explained, "Mercy and Catherine McAuley (foundress of Sister Jean's congregation) are on the same doorstep in doing good things." Anna's Place is definitely grateful that *this* generous Sister of Mercy showed up at their doorstep!

◀ In addition to helping prepare and serve the weekly lunch, Sister Jean also chairs exercise classes and sometimes accompanies guests to programs held at Neumann University in Aston and Archmere Academy in Wilmington.



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Select areas of interest to receive information about the congregation.

- ☐ Companion Program ☐ Franciscan Spiritual Centers (select one): ☐ Aston, PA ☐ Milwaukie, OR
- ☐ Community Supported Agriculture: Red Hill Farm, Aston PA ☐ Sisters of St. Francis Foundation ☐ Vocations



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Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia



SrsofStFrancis

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Fourteenth Annual Raffle

Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia

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Grand Prize: \$5,000

Seller's Prize: \$100

Second Prize: \$3,000

Seller's Prize: \$75

Third Prize: \$2,000

Seller's Prize: \$50

Fourth Prize: \$1,000

Seller's Prize: \$35

Fifth Prize: \$500

Seller's Prize: \$25

Sixth Prize: \$250

Seller's Prize: \$15

Seventh Prizes (3): \$150 each

Seller's Prize: \$10

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The Sisters of St. Francis 19th Annual Golf Tournament

Monday, September 9, 2013
Radley Run Country Club
West Chester, Pennsylvania

▲ Golfers enjoy a day of fun and recreation while helping to support the Sisters of St. Francis' ministries.

For more information, contact Sharon Tracy at (610) 558-5352 or stracy@osfphila.org.



▲ (L-R) Sisters Esther Anderson, Margaret Jones, Eleanor Moore, Patrice Feeney, Anne McNamara, and Mary Teresa Coll were among those who gathered to celebrate the 25th anniversary of St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter.

The Sisters of St. Francis have been ministering to the elderly and the infirm for over 150 years. It wasn't until 1987, however, that they were permitted to care for their own family members without taking a leave of absence. Today, sixteen of our sisters minister to family members with diminished capabilities. Read two of their stories on page 4 and learn how the congregation gives them support and love.



CELEBRATING 25 years of Service

In March St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter in Phoenixville celebrated its 25 years of service to families who are homeless. Among the 200 guests were Pennsylvania State Senator Andy Dinniman, Pennsylvania State Representative Warren Kampf, and Phoenixville Mayor Leo Scoda, all of whom presented citations to Sister Christine Kranichfeld, the shelter's director. The shelter's founding sisters, Sisters Patrice Feeney and Margaret Jones, were also present. The evening's activities included both live and silent auctions, the proceeds of which will help to support the shelter. Over its 25 years, St. Mary's has housed 550 families, provided 60,000 nights of shelter, and served more than 180,000 meals.