

Volume 12.3 Winter 2009

Good NEWS

A Publication of  THE SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS OF PHILADELPHIA

Also in this issue:

- Serving Others Serving Time
- People & Places
- Sharing the Good News

Deep Roots *and* Relationship in Rural Country

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

Instruments of Peace

A decade ago we began this new millennium with great festivities and hopes for a better world. Shortly afterward, pictures of fireworks and celebrations were replaced with scenes of terrorism and violence that are showing little sign of waning. The media regularly makes apparent that our world is still ravaged by war, violence, and the destruction of nature. Yet, interspersed with these realities are stories of people who are instruments of peace to individuals, families, cities, and countries.



**Sister Esther Anderson, OSF
Congregational Minister**

St. Francis of Assisi was faced with many of the same realities in thirteenth century Italy. Although he lived in a medieval world, cities were at war with each other, inequalities between classes led to violence, and ignorance concerning diseases caused people to be separated from their loved ones. St. Francis had seen violence as a young soldier and through prayer was led to create a culture of peace by seeking alternatives to violence. His deep appreciation of each person enabled him to see them as brothers and sisters.

In this edition, we get a glimpse of Sister Mary Killoran’s ministry at the Howard R. Young and Dolores J. Baylor Correctional Institutions in New Castle, Delaware. Mary facilitates an Alternatives to Violence Program. She also teaches catechism classes and meets individually with women prisoners. Sister Mary assists people in finding alternatives to violence and helps them to renew their relationship with God. By accepting each person as brother and sister, she allows herself to be an instrument of God’s peace.

In Oregon, in a very different environment, Sister Marie Monica Borden ministers as a hospital visitor at St. Anthony Hospital in Pendleton. She is a peaceful presence to patients, helping them to feel safe and comfortable so that they can share what is going on in their lives disrupted by illness. Whether praying with patients, supporting families, or simply fluffing pillows, she too seeks to be an instrument of God’s peace.

If we are to improve our world, we need to be peaceful people and to share our peace with others. In the spirit of St. Francis, I wish you Peace and all good!

Sister Esther Anderson, OSF



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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 Monica takes her ministry as a patient visitor to heart. She is there every day with a kind word, soft touch, or warm blanket. Her kindness even extends past the walls of the hospital when she visits patients who have been transferred to nursing homes.



As a patient visitor Sister Monica offers each patient the values that characterize St. Anthony Hospital: compassion, reverence, excellence, and integrity.

Deep Roots *and*

“THE RELATIONSHIPS THAT DEVELOP IN SMALL TOWNS ARE SIGNIFICANT AND



St. Katharine Drexel, foundress of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament in Philadelphia, promoted education of Native American and African American children. She generously funded St. Andrew Mission, Pendleton, Oregon, in the late 1800s. This window in St. Andrew Mission Church depicts St. Katharine Drexel with a Native American child.

When Sister Marie Monica Borden makes a trip to the grocery store, she knows it will probably take longer than she anticipated. That’s because she often ends up chatting with people she has visited at St. Anthony Hospital in Pendleton, Oregon. “I run into the store really fast for a loaf of bread and come out 30 minutes later because I meet former patients in the store,” said Sister Monica who has been

a patient visitor for three years. “They tell me how much it meant for me to be with them when they were in the hospital or to be with their mother or their child when they were in the hospital. They’re very appreciative of a simple visit.”

At St. Anthony Hospital, relationship makes a difference—not only the relationship that exists between staff and patients, but



Relationship

in Rural Country

PENDLETON IS NO EXCEPTION.”

also the relationship that the Sisters of St. Francis have maintained with the hospital's history and culture. Sister Monica—along with Sister Jackie Christian, a medical coder—is continuing a 108-year tradition of the Sisters of St. Francis serving at St. Anthony's, a rural hospital located near the base of the Blue Mountains in eastern Oregon. The property was originally home to St. Joseph Academy, a boarding school

which the Sisters of St. Francis reopened and staffed in 1887. The building was located in part of what is now the hospital parking lot—and Sister Monica is one of its graduates.

Those early sisters soon recognized the need for healthcare as well as education. In her memoirs, Sister Salesia, a music and art teacher at the academy from 1900 to 1943,

quoted Sister Stanislaus: “Now we are free from debt and we can start a hospital as the doctors have been asking for one for a very long time as they see the need for one.” In 1901 four sisters began caring for patients in a large, two-story Victorian house on the academy property. This dwelling eventually became the headquarters of the western province and novitiate.

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“AT ST. ANTHONY HOSPITAL, RELATIONSHIP MAKES A DIFFERENCE—NOT ONLY THE RELATIONSHIP THAT EXISTS BETWEEN STAFF AND PATIENTS, BUT ALSO THE RELATIONSHIP THAT THE SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS HAVE MAINTAINED WITH THE HOSPITAL’S HISTORY AND CULTURE.”

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The ways in which the Sisters of St. Francis have ministered in the Pendleton area have changed over the years. True to patterns established early in the congregation’s history, the sisters have responded to the various needs of a particular time and place as resources allowed and have moved on once those needs are met in other ways. Sister Jeanne Nisley, the last “sister nurse” at St. Anthony’s left the hospital in the late 1990s. She had served as a patient care nurse and nursing supervisor for 18 years. In recent years other sisters have ministered—not only at the hospital but also in the broader community—in a variety of ways: switchboard operator, central supply processor, patient visitor, foster grandparent.

Small Town Hospital with Big Impact

Part of Catholic Health Initiatives, St. Anthony’s is licensed for 49 beds. However, as

a critical access hospital, it maintains a capacity of only 25 patients. Although it has a small patient population, its coverage area is extensive. The hospital provides medical care for patients who live within a radius of 150 miles and offers a variety of services, including an emergency room, medical surgical unit, outpatient surgery, digital imaging, and a family



In addition to the prayers, Sister Monica brings Eucharist and prayer booklets to all patients in the hospital who indicate they wish to receive them.

birth center. Located in the town which hosts one of the largest rodeos in the country, the hospital reflects the rural and western culture of the surrounding area. Where else but at St. Anthony’s would visitors find doctors making rounds dressed in pressed jeans and cowboy boots?

Making Rounds – Building Relationships

Sister Monica stops by to visit patients throughout the hospital but especially enjoys interacting with families in the Family Birth Center. “It’s one of my favorite areas because it’s such a happy place,” she said. “I’ve been invited to births and found myself crying. It’s such an amazing miracle that is happening.” She even had the opportunity two years ago to hold a newborn baby girl while the nurses cleaned the infant up and checked her vital signs. “They have a picture of me holding her while they’re doing that,” Sister Monica recalled. “I send birthday cards to her now.”

Larry Blanc, director of marketing at St. Anthony’s, helps Sister Monica prepare the altar for Mass in the hospital’s St. Clare Chapel. A daily intention asks for God’s gracious blessings on patients and their families, administrators, employees, and vendors.



Sister Jackie Christian reviews patient records in the medical billing department. Her nursing skills are readily transferred to coding of medical care.



Volunteers also contribute to the patient care by sewing passage quilts that are given to patients who are dying and to the underprivileged families of newborns.



Approximately 400 babies begin life at St. Anthony Hospital each year. The Family Birth Center is a favorite stop on Sister Monica's rounds. Looking through the photo display recalls fond memories.



Sister Monica also visits the medical surgical floor during her rounds. She recalled a man who declared himself an atheist when she explained why she was there to see him. "He was there seven or eight days," she said. "By the end of his time at the hospital, he was saying, 'I'll see you tomorrow, Sister. God bless you now.' A transformation seemed to happen to him—so beautiful to see."

She's also willing to return to the hospital after work hours if someone needs her. One evening she was called back to visit a patient. "I didn't remember anybody near dying on that floor today," Sister Monica recalled. "I thought the patient in the room was a young boy so I was preparing my heart for an imminent death situation and asking the Holy Spirit to help me with the family." When she arrived at the boy's room, she asked him what he needed. "He looked at me and said, 'Sister, would you fluff my pillow?'" she said with a laugh. "So I fluffed his pillow and stayed with

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Pendleton History

- 1887** Archbishop Gross asked Mother Agnes Bucher to send sisters to Pendleton to minister at St. Joseph's Academy. Originally begun in 1884 by the Sisters of Mercy, the school had since been closed. It reopened on September 12, 1887. The initial privations and poverty were severe.
- 1901** Four sisters began to care for the sick in a two-story dwelling on the property of St. Joseph Academy. They could only care for about 12 patients.
- 1902** Groundbreaking for the creation of the new 40-bed hospital began. By 1903 the hospital was completed and dedicated by Bishop O'Reilly, the first bishop in the newly formed Diocese of Baker.
- 1903** The western novitiate was opened in Pendleton. Sister Stanislaus was the first elected western provincial. For 45 years (1903-1948), the western novitiate was established here.
- 1910** St. Anthony Hospital School of Nursing opened with six students. It remained in operation for 46 years and graduated 212 nurses.
- 1922** On October 22, 1922, St. Anthony Hospital expanded with a new four-story wing providing facilities for all major branches of medicine.
- 1948** In August 1948, the western novitiate was transferred to Our Lady of Angels Convent in Portland, Oregon.
- 1961** St. Anthony Hospital expanded again with an 80-bed addition and new entrance. Over the years the sisters and staff had treated over 5,000 patients and helped birth almost 700 babies.
- 1974** St. Joseph Academy closed.
- 2009** Today the Sisters of St. Francis still have a strong presence in Pendleton. Even though the number of sisters currently ministering there is only three, the Franciscan spirit is alive and well in the hospital and in the culture of the surrounding area.

Twenty-seven years after the reopening of St. Joseph Academy, enrollment was up as shown by the class of 1914.



HOW YOU CAN HELP...

- Volunteer to visit patients at a hospital in your community.
- Pray for those who are hospitalized.
- Offer support to families who have a sick or dying loved one by offering to run errands, prepare meals, or drive them to or from the hospital.
- Contribute to the ministry. Funds are needed to help families cope with the loss of a loved one. Send tax-deductible contributions for this ministry to the congregation's development office (use envelope provided); checks payable to "St. Francis Foundation."

Share with us the good news of what you did!

Call or email us with the action(s) you took:
(610) 558-7726, goodnews@osfphila.org.

▼ *Sister Marie Monica has served on St. Anthony Hospital Board of Trustees for the past seven years. "It is said that Catholic healthcare is a ministry that is a business—which IS a ministry," she says.*

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him a few minutes. He just needed a grandma for a moment."

Serving the Blessing – Spreading the Word

Sister Monica's hospital ministry also includes serving as sacristan for weekday Masses celebrated at St. Anthony's. "Those Masses are available to the staff and the general public," she said. "My view of the Mass is not so much that the staff is able to come to Mass but that prayer is going on for the blessing of the hospital and the patients every day. It's so meaningful to have the whole hospital blessed in that way."

A frequent celebrant of the daily Masses is Jesuit Father Michael J. Fitzpatrick, pastor of St. Andrew's Mission on the Umatilla Indian Reservation. Sister Monica also assists him at the mission by training Eucharistic ministers, helping with catechism classes, and serving as chaplain to the Catholic Daughters. Here, too, she is re-establishing a relationship that began more than a century ago when the Sisters of St. Francis opened St. Andrew School on the Umatilla Reservation.

"Sister Monica is very positive and affirming in her approach to both people and issues," Father Fitzpatrick said. "She's very down to earth, very present to people."

Becoming a Peaceful Presence

Being present to people is at the heart of Sister Monica's visits with patients. "I enjoy meeting with the patients because they appreciate our presence," she said. "It is a great blessing to bring a little peace to their hearts when they're in the hospital. They're uneasy because they're not in control. It's a nice thing to be a peaceful presence to them."

Pastor Rod Harwood, director of mission operations at St. Anthony's, including spiritual care services, also welcomes Sister Monica's presence. "I truly love having Sister Monica in the spiritual care department," said Harwood, a Protestant minister affiliated with the Church of God. "She's the type of person that when you're around her, you feel safe and comfortable. As a result, you're able to share what's going on inside of you."

A Look Behind The Scenes

Sister Jackie Christian, who has been a nurse for more than 50 years, also plays an important role at St. Anthony's—one that functions behind the scenes. For the past 19 years, she has worked as a coder in the medical records department. "I enjoy using my nursing knowledge and having a job that will benefit the hospital," she explained. "I couldn't do this work without my previous education in nursing and the nursing practice that I went through. It helps that I can read doctors' handwriting," Jackie chuckles.



Tucked away in a corner of St. Andrew Mission Church Cemetery, guarded by a guardian angel statue, are the tiny graves of babies who did not live beyond the early months of their conception. With the parents' permission, these babies are remembered with a burial site and a marker. Parents are invited to attend the simple funeral. Sister Monica visits their corner and the graves of Native Americans with whom she has grown close.



“I ENJOY USING MY NURSING KNOWLEDGE AND HAVING A JOB THAT WILL BENEFIT THE HOSPITAL,” SHE EXPLAINED. “I COULDN’T DO THIS WORK WITHOUT MY PREVIOUS EDUCATION IN NURSING AND THE NURSING PRACTICE THAT I WENT THROUGH.”

Sister Jackie enjoys her coding work even though it can be challenging at times.

“The inpatient charts are quite complicated and I know from my previous nursing experience what information to put into the computer,” she said. “We manage all the charts and that’s a big process. There are continual changes.”

In addition to frequent changes in billing and coding procedures, Sister Jackie and the medical records staff work within tight deadlines. “We have to get the chart coded within four days of a patient discharge,” she said. “We have strict timelines and we try to follow them very closely. We’re one of the top hospitals in Catholic Health Initiatives in getting the medical coding finished so they can bill the patients and insurance companies.”

Randall Mee, president and CEO of St. Anthony’s, praised Sister Jackie’s diligence. “Having medical charts reviewed and accu-

ately coded in a timely manner ensures that we are receiving the correct reimbursements so we avoid any problems with fraud or abuse,” he explained. “It also helps the hospital to receive reimbursements in a timely manner and maintain our viability.”

The Tradition Continues

In the more than 100 years since the Sisters of St. Francis first began their relationship with the people of eastern Oregon, times have changed as have the types of ministries in which the sisters engage. What has not changed, however, is the mission, the way in which the sisters relate to the people whom they serve. Sister Monica and Sister Jackie are among those whose ministries help to maintain and to live out those relationships—both in the hospital and in the broader community. “The relationships that develop in small towns are significant and Pendleton is no exception,” said Sister Monica. “And such



As a patient visitor, Sister Marie Monica frequently stops by the center to meet with families there. She says, “To hold a newborn, perfect infant can tell you a lot about God. There is a quote in the hallway of the Family Birth Center: ‘Babies are God’s opinion that the world should continue.’”

relationships are mutually enriching. Our Franciscan spirit is deeply implanted in this hospital and this community. And our own history is all the richer for the roots we’ve planted here.” ■

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

PEOPLE & PLACES



Sister Ronnie Grier was part of the planning committee for the National Black Sisters' Conference annual gathering.

PENNSYLVANIA

Sister Ronnie Grier attended the annual gathering of the National Black Sisters' Conference in Philadelphia. The theme of the 2009 conference, "We Carry Our Vessels Filled with Hope, Compassion, and Courage," reflects the organization's mission which states, "The gift of our womanhood, that channel through which the Son of God Himself chose to come into the human race, endows us with those qualities and prerogatives which are designed for the deliverance of humanity." Sisters Betty Kane, Patricia Kane, Anne Amati, and Annette Lucchese joined Sister Ronnie for the awards banquet on the closing evening of the conference.



WASHINGTON

Few people have a hospital that is—at least in part—named after them. St. Anthony Hospital, which opened in Gig Harbor in March 2009, however, owes its name at least in part to Sister Anthony Consilia Griffin who died in 2003. True, St. Anthony is the patron of sailors and fishermen, very fitting to the hospital's peninsular location. But the facility's name is also a remembrance of Sister Anthony Consilia, acknowledging her many years of dedicated service to healthcare in the Tacoma area. After the new hospital opened, the people in the community also asked that her contributions be remembered in some concrete way. That request was honored and a permanent display now graces the hospital's third floor between the inpatient surgical unit and the critical care unit. The display includes two photos of Sister Anthony Consilia and a plaque outlining her contributions to St. Joseph Medical Center in Tacoma.



NEW JERSEY

The students at St. Catherine of Bologna School in Ringwood quite literally filled an "ark" for the people of Guatemala and depressed sections of the U.S. The project began when Sister Mary Ann McCarthy told the then-seventh graders about her experiences in Guatemala. The students decided to make this a project to be completed by

their 2009 graduation. The class far exceeded expectations. By sponsoring a Mission Fair; doing chores and donating the proceeds; selling t-shirts, baked goods, and roses; and a variety of other fundraisers, the school raised \$5,000. Using the image gleaned from the story of Noah, the Ringwood students filled their "ark" two by two—and sometimes six by six—with ducks, llamas, sheep, water buffaloes, donkeys, cows, rabbits, geese, guinea pigs, goats, beehives, oxen, chicks, and camels. Organizers at Heifer International who coordinated the project commended the students for completing in two years what would normally require five years.



As part of TCHS' environmental efforts, students, parents, faculty, and staff worked together to create the school's outdoor classroom containing a sustainable garden using only native Maryland plants.

MARYLAND

The Catholic High School of Baltimore has another "first" among its achievements—the first Catholic high school in Baltimore to receive the Maryland Green School designation from the Maryland Association for Environmental Outdoor Education. TCHS spent the past two years improving its gardens, planting trees, and participating in Baltimore's single-stream recycling program. The school revived its natural wetland as part of the Herring Run Watershed—including preserving a young weeping willow tree and cattails. The administration encouraged teachers to integrate Green School initiatives into the curriculum by having students write essays and complete environmentally related projects. In addition, the school invested in numerous "green" capital projects.

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.

PENNSYLVANIA

Neumann University students returning to campus in August found a few significant changes. Construction efforts slated for completion by early fall were, for the most part, finished. The long-awaited Center for Sport, Spirituality and Character Development was ready for tours and the dedication date was set. St. John Neumann Circle was completed and enhanced, not only by the redesigned pedestrian access paths but also by attractive landscaping and newly erected statues of St. John Neumann and Mother Francis Bachmann. Internally, science labs in the Bachmann Building had undergone renovations that support and promote the science curriculum as well as student learning and enrollment.



ITALY

When scholars gather in Foligno in November for an international conference honoring the 700th anniversary of the death of Angela of Foligno, Sister Diane Tomkinson will be among them. Sister Diane has been invited to present a paper on the Trinitarian theology of this 13th century Franciscan. For Sister Diane the topic is one of ongoing interest. She published her dissertation on Angela of Foligno's life and theology and continues ongoing research on the topic. This summer she also commemorated the anniversary by teaching a course on Angela of Foligno at Salve Regina College.



► Once the interior of the new Center for Sport, Spirituality and Character Development was completed, all that remained was to complete the landscaping and hardscaping activities.



NEW JERSEY

Sister Matthew Cola is a woman who, when it comes to volunteer work, wears many hats. When she volunteers at St. Catherine of Bologna School, she enjoys sharing her own love of opera. Each year, after some educational preparation, she takes 45 students to a rehearsal at the Metropolitan Opera. Come Christmas Sister Matthew turns into Mrs. Santa, visiting the students at St. Catherine's, the Franciscans at Holy Name Friary, the Head Start Program, the Spectrum Day Care, and the sisters in St. Joseph Residence. When it's Dr. Seuss Day at the school, she's on hand to read to the students. She also helps with the planning of St. Catherine's annual Patron of the Arts Exhibit. She serves as the assistant poetry coordinator and what she calls the "odds and ends coordinator," which includes anything from washing pots and spraying plants to accepting the art work. She also generously donates her own paintings to the exhibit.

▼ Students from Mother Seton Academy are especially proud of their new lockers which replaced the gray bins in which they had previously stored their belongings.

◀ Students from Mother Seton Academy toured their new school prior to opening day and considered the prayer room one of their favorite places.



MARYLAND

Students from Mother Seton Academy, one of the congregation's cosponsored ministries in Baltimore, began the 2009-2010 school year in a new school. A capital campaign launched several years ago raised funds for renovating a building on Greenmount Avenue and in May the academy assumed ownership of the newly renovated building. Students returned to school to find new lockers; an art room; bright, cheerful classrooms; and—one of their favorites—a prayer room. The MSA family carries with it fond memories of their old school on Ann Street but looks forward to new and wonderful learning experiences in the new school.



PENNSYLVANIA

Sister Marguerite O'Beirne, Vice President for Mission and Ministry at Neumann University, was recently named to the Inaugural Irish Education 100, a listing of the leading figures in education across North America generated by the *Irish Voice* magazine. Niall O'Dowd, founding publisher of the magazine, described Irish Education 100 as an effort to recognize the central role of educators. "More than a reflection of the past," he said, "we endeavor to build a creative communication that will

strengthen Irish identity in the 21st century with new collaborations, partnerships, and friendships. We view educators as the central link with Ireland in our globalized world."



Sister Mary Killoran embraces Mike Beasley, an inmate facilitator in the Alternatives to Violence program, during a planning meeting at the Howard R. Young Correctional Facility in Wilmington, Delaware.



Omar Rivera greets fellow inmate facilitators during an Alternatives to Violence Program planning meeting at the Howard R. Young Correctional Facility.

Serving Others Serving Time

“THESE ARE GOD’S PEOPLE, THE FORGOTTEN ONES,” SISTER MARY SAID. “HE IS JUST USING ME AS AN INSTRUMENT.”

Sister Mary Killoran’s ministry personifies the Matthew 25:40 verse, “Whatever you did for one of these least brothers [and sisters] of mine, you did for me.” The “least brothers and sisters” she serves are convicted criminals in Delaware state prisons.



Sister Mary Killoran.

But prisons weren’t on Sister Mary’s radar when she was searching for a new ministry in 1997. “I knew I wanted to do something with peace and justice,” she said. “I started looking for places where I could possibly be on

a team that would be helping people who were economically poor.” She contacted the Delaware Pacem in Terris (Peace on Earth), a peace and justice organization that suggested establishing a halfway house for prisoners leaving Gander Hill Prison (now called the Howard R. Young Correctional Institution) in Wilmington, Delaware.

“I was not interested because the word ‘prison’ just didn’t sit well with me,” she said. “I knew Gander Hill years ago. It was old, gray, and ugly. I thought I would be depressed. I also didn’t feel qualified to be running a halfway house so I just dismissed the idea.”

Sister Mary then called the Society of Friends to see if she could attend the Alternatives to Violence Program (AVP) which the Quakers initiated in prisons about 40 years ago.

Discovering that the program was primarily prison-based, she noticed a trend in her search for a new ministry. “I’d heard the word ‘prison’ twice and later there was a third reference to it,” she said. “I finally decided maybe there’s a message here.”

After being trained as an AVP facilitator, Sister Mary went to Howard R. Young for the first time. “I was scared—but not so much because of the men,” she said. “I wasn’t sure what I would have to do so I was nervous. On top of that, a woman announced that I would be leading the prayer. There I was—going to the stage in front of 150 men thinking, ‘I’m not prepared for this.’”

Twelve years after this first visit, however, Sister Mary is accustomed to working with prisoners at Howard R. Young and the Delores J. Baylor Women’s Correctional Institution in New Castle, Delaware. “One of the things I learned early on is that the prisoners want to know what I think of them,” she said. “I simply tell them, ‘Well, I know that everybody makes mistakes.’ That’s all they need to hear. I think that gives them the sense that I’m accepting them for who they are.”

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Sister Mary Killoran meets with her team of inmate facilitators to discuss upcoming AVP workshops. She has worked in prison ministry for 12 years.





Sister Mary Killoran greets inmate Catherine Culp during a catechism class at the Delores J. Baylor Correctional Institution in New Castle, Delaware. Sister Mary meets regularly with Catherine to pray and talk about the challenges of being imprisoned.

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"I obviously don't condone what they did but I believe in them and that they want to move forward with their lives and succeed."

A Program with Positive Results

Tom*, one former inmate who served an eight-year prison term at Howard R. Young, experienced Sister Mary's acceptance and respect on a regular basis. Tom attended the basic and advanced AVP workshops and eventually became a trainer who worked with Sister Mary and other community volunteers for seven years. "She's someone who gives affirmations and lets people know when they're doing a good job," Tom said. "Those things are so important when you're in that kind of environment and you're feeling like your life has just been ruined."

*Name changed for anonymity



Maria Zakrociemski (far right) translates for two Spanish-speaking inmates during a catechism class at the Delores J. Baylor Correctional Institution. Maria, a practicing Catholic, attends the weekly class regularly at the prison.

Held on weekends, the AVP basic workshops focus on five themes: affirmation, communication, cooperation, transforming power, and community building. Tom, who now runs an educational software company, said he still uses the skills he learned from the AVP. "I honestly believe you get more out of it as a trainer because you get reinforced on the communications and conflict resolution skills that you're teaching," he said. "Those are things I've been able to use here on my job when issues with employees come up."

Sister Mary explained that the weekend program is voluntary for prisoners and trainers. "We say the first night, 'You don't have to be here. You can leave if you want to,'" she said. "If anybody has an attitude, it usually dissipates because it's not a program where we're doing teaching. It's experiential."

Sister Mary feels that the men enjoy the experiential aspect of the workshops. "The exercises are interesting and there's a lot of humor in them," she said. "You see these big men laughing and carrying on, doing silly games you play with children—but it really gets their energy going."

Feedback from the participants is overwhelmingly positive. "They seem to appreciate it a great deal," Sister Mary said. "I enjoy it when they say, 'This is the best program I've ever been in.' I see them connecting with each other and having fun and also learning. And



A group of female inmates pray during a catechism class facilitated by Sister Mary Killoran at the Delores J. Baylor Correctional Institution.

then they'll say the most wonderful things about themselves and what they learned."

Gene, who has been a lead trainer at Howard Young for two years, said the AVP has helped him use his leadership skills more constructively. "At first I didn't want to be a facilitator," Gene said. "Now it's two years later, and I'm still doing it. Being in the AVP helps me to want to do something because it's the right thing to do, not just because of the certificate. I've done so much damage to my family and friends. Now it's time for me to start doing something positive. This makes me feel good about myself. I'm doing it for me and to help others."

Kasai, who has been an AVP trainer for a year, enjoys learning while teaching fellow inmates how to resolve conflicts peacefully. "I learn something every time I do a workshop," Kasai said. "I learn something from the trainers and even the participants in the workshops. It's a helpful and humbling experience."

Teaching Catechism at Women's Prison

In addition to being an AVP trainer, Sister Mary also facilitates a catechism class on Saturday mornings at Delores J. Baylor and meets individually with a few of the women prisoners during the week.

Maria Zakrociemski, who was raised Catholic, is a regular at the catechism class. "I'm here faithfully every Saturday and it gives me something to look forward to," Maria said. "I have learned so much from Sister Mary. She's really good at explaining Catholic teachings."

Maria also recalled a time when a friend died at the prison. "Sister Mary was the only one who came to see me that same night," she said. "She was willing to let me cry and listened to whatever I had to say to her. She's so sweet, so kind."

The one-on-one meetings give Sister Mary the opportunity to listen to the women and offer encouragement. She often reads a scripture passage and prays with the women. "Some women can really be in crisis," she explained. "So I encourage them to hang in there and do the best they can to keep hope—even when things are down."

Sister Mary has also been a positive influence on Catherine Culp who has served 11 years in prison. "She's helped me through a lot of my transitions since I've been in here," Catherine said. "I don't think I would have been able to get through it without her. Sister Mary has helped me become closer to God again."

Sister Mary also provided emotional support when Catherine went through her first trial.

"She came to my trial almost every day," Catherine explained. "Even her sister came from out of state. When Sister Mary couldn't be there, her sister was there. That really meant a lot to me. She's just like an angel that was sent to me from God."

Guiding the Way

And what about life after prison? Remember Tom from Howard R. Young Correctional Institution? Although Tom has been out of prison for six years, he fondly recalled his experiences with Sister Mary. "She's had a very positive impact on my life," he said. "Mary was definitely a blessing for me. I remember one day having dinner with her and just telling her, 'I love you, Mary,' and I meant it. I'm really grateful that I had the opportunity to work with her and to still know her."

Sister Mary, who celebrated fifty years as a Sister of St. Francis in October 2009, plans

► *An inmate at the Howard R. Young Correctional Institution holds a Transforming Power Guidelines card, which is used in the Alternatives to Violence Program workshops.*

HOW YOU CAN HELP...

- Keep in prayer the prisoners, the victims, and the families of both.
 - Call a chaplain at a local correctional facility to inquire about volunteer opportunities.
 - Write to a prisoner through a Pen Pal program such as the National Association of the Holy Name Society Prison Apostolate (www.nahns.com).
- Pen Pal Ministry
P.O. Box 52416
Philadelphia, PA 19115
Phone: 215-698-2585
E-mail: mmocsprtgp@aol.com
- Volunteer to be a facilitator of an antiviolence program such as the one organized by the Alternatives to Violence Project.

Share with us the good news of what you did!

Call or email us with the action(s) you took: (610) 558-7726, goodnews@osfphila.org.

to continue serving those who are serving time. Does she see herself as the one who implanted alternatives to violence or a renewed relationship with God in the lives of these women and men? "These are God's people, the forgotten ones," Sister Mary said. "He is just using me as an instrument. That part is wonderful—and I learn so much from them." ■

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



SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

Everyone has within a piece of good news.

—Anne Frank (adapted)

See more good news at www.osfphila.org



Members of the Red Hill farm CSA are interested not only in receiving their weekly allotment of organic produce, but also in finding creative ways to prepare the farm-fresh food. Katie Cavuto Boyle was the first to provide what will become a series of cooking demonstrations.



What's "Cooking" at the Farm?

Red Hill Farm branched out into a new dimension last summer—cooking demonstrations. Katie Cavuto Boyle, a contestant on "America's Next Food Network Star" and a member of the farm, shared her expertise with members and their friends. The programs were held in the barn which was decorated with wild flowers from the farm. The tractors, the equipment, and the garlic hanging in the barn made a great backdrop for cooking demos that highlighted farm-fresh food. Katie's presentations on both cold preps and hot food cooking were well received. She demonstrated several ways to use zucchini in a meal, made an appetizer of shredded beets and herbed soft cheese on crustini bread, and

shared lots of cooking tips. In addition to farm members, a surprising number of nonmembers came to the presentations and Red Hill Farm's waiting list expanded as a result. Katie's presentation also provided the impetus for other members to share their skills and a demonstration on using food from the farm in Indian and Thai dishes is scheduled for the fall.

Actively Seeking Change

The Office of Corporate Social Responsibility continues its outstanding efforts in working for a more just and equitable society. The 2009 Proxy Voting Guide from the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility described the congregation as "one of the most active faith-based institutional filers in 2009." This year's 20 resolutions included filings on traditional seed-sharing rights, food insecurity and tobacco use, healthcare reform principles, predatory credit card practices, mountain top removal, GHG emissions, Chair and CEO separation, and human rights. The congregation was also recognized by Fonkoze, a micro-financial institution offering a range of financial services to the rural-based poor in Haiti. Fonkoze's newsletter reports, "The Sisters of St. Francis made available crucial loan funds that have revolved for more than a decade, providing micro-credit loans for some of the most forgotten women in our world." Sister Nora Nash, Director of Corporate Social Responsibility, explained why the congregation has maintained such a long relationship with Fonkoze. "We are clear about investing with organizations that are improving a local area or a country and are about transforming social, economic, and environmental conditions as well," she said. "We particularly like to invest in organizations like Fonkoze where the local community is involved. The fact that Fonkoze clients serve on the board is an example of the tremendous possibility for self-determination."



Gathering Day 2009

Gathering Day 2009 was truly a Spirit-filled day in so many ways. Sisters and companions gathered in the Neumann University Life Center on Sunday morning to celebrate both the 800th Anniversary of the Franciscan Movement and being a part of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia. As part of the prayer ritual, attendees were graced by visits from St. Francis (Brother Bill Short), St. Patrick (Sister Mary Kennedy), Chief Seattle (Sister Rose Mary Holter), and our foundress, Mother Francis Bachmann (Sister Anne Amati). Although their lives spanned the centuries, each of these historical figures shared common threads in their spirituality, their faith, their belief in the sacredness of all creation, and their trust in God's providence and loving care. The main presentation was a dialogue about Franciscan Evangelical Life with Bill Short, OFM; Joe Chinnici, OFM; and Mary Beth Ingham, CSJ. Their sharings stressed the unique gift of the Franciscan charism—a gift that is much needed in a world hungry for spirituality and hope.

Responding to God's Call

As part of Gathering Day's closing liturgy, Sisters Patricia Kerezsi and Rose Mary Eve Holter renewed their vows. As Sister Esther Anderson called the two sisters forward to renew their profession of vows, she quoted from the congregation's Constitutions: "A vocation to consecrated life, like every true vocation, is necessarily described within the context of mystery: the mystery of God's call and the mystery of human freedom." In renewing their vows, Sisters Patricia and Rose Mary responded "freely and unreservedly" to the mystery of God's call. Those gathered in chapel, in a gesture of welcome and support, prayed over the two sisters and sang the "Blessing of St. Francis." This celebration of sisterhood and renewed commitment to Franciscan evangelical life was a fitting finale to the Gathering Day events commemorating the 800th Anniversary of the Franciscan Movement.



▲ By their renewal of vows, Sisters Patricia and Rose Mary Eve responded "freely and unreservedly" to the mystery of God's call.



In Memoriam

Sister Donald Ignatius Schisler
6/1/09

Sister Leona Marie Cain
6/22/09

Sister Shirley Boucher
(Sister David John)
6/30/09

Sister Crispin Hanselmann
7/12/09

Sister Doloretta Francis O'Sullivan
7/19/09

Sister Martin Regina McConnell
7/30/09

Sister Antoinette Marie Fermo
8/5/09

Sister Mary Grace MacDonnell
8/14/09

Sister Joan Morris
(Sister James Mary)
8/19/09

Sister Philomena Rosaire Glynn
8/25/09

Sister Alberta Chelius
9/14/09

Companions Come Together to Celebrate with Sisters

Seventeen companions and 33 sisters from Portland and Tacoma gathered at St. Ann's Convent in June for their annual gathering. They toured the newly renovated convent and enjoyed a delicious barbeque lunch, complete with chicken, burgers, hot dogs, salad, and, of course, dessert. Seeing the new chapel was one of the highlights of the day. In late afternoon, the companions gathered for prayer and a blessing. They named the sisters and companions who are or have been a blessing in their lives. Each person also shared ways in which being a Franciscan companion or Sister of St. Francis has also been a blessing. The service concluded with the Companions Prayer and the Blessing of St. Clare. Another particularly meaningful aspect of the day was the fact that, since October 2008 the companions and sisters from these two areas have been "pen pals," exchanging letters, emails, and phone calls. It was a delight for many to meet their pen pal in person at this gathering!

Focus

NEIL O'BRIEN

NEIL ASPIRES TO "DOING THE RIGHT THING IN A LESS THAN PERFECT WORLD," SEEKING FUNDAMENTAL JUSTICE, AND REMAINING RESPECTFUL IN ADVERSARIAL SITUATIONS.

► Neil is in frequent contact with the congregation with an eye to prevention; however, he does sport "an iron fist in a velvet glove" when the occasion warrants.



▲ For three generations, a Cornelius O'Brien has provided legal counsel to the congregation. The legacy lives on through Neil, pictured here at three weeks old with his father and grandfather.

Self-described as "fiercely competitive and fiercely compassionate," Neil O'Brien—legal counsel for the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia—is third in the line of O'Brien lawyers to work with the congregation. The initial connection dates back to 1925 when Cornelius I—forced to open his own law firm due to the prevailing prejudice against Irish Catholics in South/Southwest Philadelphia—became known to the congregation through St. Agnes Hospital, which lay in the heart of this geographical area. When Cornelius II became a lawyer 25 years later, the nature of the need for legal counsel changed from very sporadic

"question answering" to regularly occurring "problem solving" but the South Philly connection stuck. Neil's fond childhood memories of viewing the Mummers' Parade from St. Agnes—followed by hot chocolate and cookies with the sisters—attest to a deepening personal association as well.

By 1989, Cornelius III (Neil) had fallen heir to the family business only four years after becoming a lawyer himself. Although labor and employment law are his specialties, he is a general practitioner of the law, excluding criminal cases. In discussing his professional life, he prides himself on knowing what he doesn't know, tapping the expertise of colleagues, and getting the answer right. As one who aspires to "doing the right thing in a less than perfect world," seeking fundamental justice, and remaining respectful in adversarial situations, Neil remarks that the congregation as client is a good fit for his own values.

Sister Lynn Patrice Lavin, former congregational minister for the Sisters of St. Francis, spoke of Neil's varied relationship with the congregation. "Neil is a staunch advocate for the Sisters of St. Francis like his father and his grandfather before him," she said. "I'm always amazed that he never says 'your sisters' or 'your congregation' but always 'our sisters' or 'our congregation.' He is a bright,

humorous talker whose dedication to us and generosity of spirit knows no bounds. How well he continues to weave the O'Brien legacy with that of our own story! He is a true friend!"



◀ Married to Peggy Stevenson for twenty-eight years, Neil numbers among his passions the ocean, golf (supporting the Foundation's annual tournament since its inception), and family pets.

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Name _____ E-Mail Address _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Select areas of interest to receive information about the congregation.

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

What do you think of our new look? We are interested in your thoughts/comments:

SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS FOUNDATION

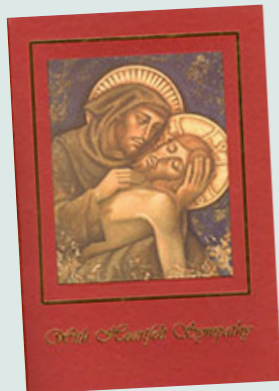
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Recipients are remembered in prayers offered monthly at the celebration of the Eucharist at Our Lady of Angels Convent in Aston, Pennsylvania, and the congregation's retirement homes in Aston, Pennsylvania; Tacoma, Washington; and Ringwood, New Jersey.

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St. Francis and Christ Memorial Card

This special card is made of a crimson linen cardstock with beautiful gold foil imprint and comes tied with a thin gold cord. The front of the card features a cut-out through which to view the St. Francis and Christ artwork of Piero Casentini. Inside is a quote from the "Canticle of the Sun" by St. Francis of Assisi, "Be praised, O God, for all that you have made... and for Sister Death, happy those whom your love calls home."

\$25 Donation Please send me _____ cards.

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This card is meant to express the compassion you feel in your heart and the faith you have

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A remembrance in prayer is a great way to celebrate a birthday, anniversary, confirmation, or get-well. Its versatility even provides using it for a deceased loved one. **Amount of gift decided by donor.**

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A picture of the beautifully colored stained glass window designed and crafted by Sister Christopher Marie Wagner, OSF, graces the cover of our newest card creation. **\$10 Donation**

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See our website at www.osfphila.org

“Women and Spirit” Exhibit

The Leadership Conference of Women Religious’ (LCWR) “Women and Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America” Exhibit is in full swing. Using photos, artifacts, and archival materials, the exhibit provides a visual history of the contributions women religious have made both to the Church and to the history of the United States. The exhibit has completed its showing at the Cincinnati History Museum and is currently on display at the Women’s Museum in Dallas, Texas. Exhibits scheduled

for 2010-2011 include:

- Smithsonian International Gallery, Washington, DC – January –April 2010
- Statue of Liberty National Monument/Ellis Island Immigration Museum, New York City – September-December 2010
- Mississippi River Museum, Dubuque, Iowa – February-April 2011



Visit www.womenandspirit.org for photos and updates.

New Look = Success!

In August 2009 we unveiled the new look of the *Good News* at the Our Lady of Angels Convent in Aston with an ice cream social for the staff and a lot of smiles. The response from our sisters and the staff was an overwhelming “Love it!” but we wondered what you, our faithful readers, would think. After the last issue of the *Good News* was mailed, a flurry of feedback came pouring in — and it was all good. We appreciate your feedback and ask that you keep it coming. Here are just a couple of the great comments we received:

“I very much appreciate your new look. It is much easier to handle and to read and, I am sure, more economical and conservation smart. Keep up all your good works. God Bless!” — Michael from Baltimore, Maryland

“Thank you a million for all the changes. Just what I’ve been wanting for a good while.” — Mary from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

“We enjoyed reading the information from a new format. Great job!” — Mary from Lancaster, Pennsylvania

“I like the new format of the Good News.” — Mac from Seattle, Washington



◀ *St. Anthony Hospital in Pendleton, Oregon, has dedicated itself to providing quality healthcare but the relationship doesn’t stop there. In the 1920s, St. Anthony Hospital hosted a day for mothers and babies. Mothers from the area, dressed for the occasion, proudly held their babies for a group photo in front of the hospital where their little ones’ lives began. Today St. Anthony’s continues the tradition of quality care, compassion, and dedication to relationship. Read more about the tradition that has continued for more than 108 years on page 4.*