

Volume 14.2 Summer 2011

# Good NEWS

A Publication of THE SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS OF PHILADELPHIA

*Also in this issue:*

- Human Trafficking: The Shocking Reality of Modern-Day Slavery
- People & Places
- Foundation Annual Report

## Following Where Life Leads

*A Wifely Beginning with A Sisterly Ending*



## 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

### *Called to be a Healing, Compassionate Presence*

**L**ast December, I visited the “Women and Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America” exhibit. It chronicles the contributions of religious communities to life in the United States for almost three hundred years. I was part of a group from a large Catholic healthcare system who planned its annual meeting so that the board and management could view the exhibit with representatives from the religious congregations who founded the original ministries.

We experienced the exhibit at the Ellis Island Immigration Museum. Ellis Island had served as a point of entry for the earliest waves of European immigrants entering the



**Sister Esther Anderson, OSF  
Congregational Minister**

United States. It was also the port of entry for many of the foundresses of religious congregations. These sisters began schools, hospitals, and orphanages to assist the new emigrants. Maria Anna Bachmann, Barbara Boll, and Anna Dorn, who began the fledgling congregation of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, arrived in New York and then traveled to Philadelphia. Through a confluence of persons and events, they founded our

congregation in 1855. The three women began their lives of service to others by welcoming into their homes young immigrant working girls and people with infectious diseases. Later, they educated immigrant children. They were a healing, compassionate presence and they offered hope to new Americans far from home.

The articles in this issue of Good News demonstrate living examples of our founding spirit. Sister Florence Petsch serves the homebound and hospitalized on the Wind River Indian Reservation in Wyoming. She lifts the spirits of the elders and encourages them to hope. Florence brings healing and compassion with her gifts of acceptance and nonjudgmental presence.

From coast to coast, sisters in collaboration with other groups raise awareness about human trafficking, the illegal trade of human beings for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation or forced labor. They provide education, volunteer as counselors and tutors, raise funds to benefit safe houses, and advocate for anti-trafficking legislation.

May we continue to heed the call to be a healing and compassionate presence in our world today.

*By Sister Esther Anderson, OSF*



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*Human trafficking is the illegal trade of human beings for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation or forced labor. The numbers are shocking and, believe it or not, it is probably happening in your community. Learn what our sisters are doing to help combat this horrific crime and how you can help.*

Written by Elena Perri

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*Sister Florence Petsch has a unique personal story. She began her vocation as a wife and a mother but after becoming a widow, Florence felt called to follow a different path of service. Her vocation story is quite an inspiration to many who have faced tragedy and discovered opportunity.*

Written by Elena Perri

Photography by Andrea Cipriani-Mecchi

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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 Florence Petsch holds a photo of herself with her daughter Martha. Sister Florence was married 25 years to Donald Petsch. Three years after his death in 1976, she joined the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia.



FOUR-FIFTHS OF VICTIMS IN CONFIRMED U.S. SEX TRAFFICKING INCIDENTS WERE IDENTIFIED AS U.S. CITIZENS (83%) WHILE MOST CONFIRMED LABOR TRAFFICKING VICTIMS WERE IDENTIFIED AS UNDOCUMENTED PERSONS (67%) OR QUALIFIED IMMIGRANTS (28%).

# Human

**T**he statistics are staggering: 27 million modern-day slaves around the world. One million children exploited through the global sex trade market each year. Billions of dollars made on human trafficking victims, many of whom are women and girls.

An even more shocking fact: human trafficking could be happening right in your own community. According to the U.S. Department of State, approximately 600,000 to 800,000 victims annually are trafficked across international borders worldwide. These estimates include women, men, and children. Victims are generally trafficked into the U.S. from Asia, Central and South America, and Eastern Europe. Many victims trafficked into the United States do not speak or understand English and are therefore isolated and unable to communicate with service providers, law enforcement, and others who might be able to help



*Dawn's Place in Philadelphia is a safe haven for foreign women who are victims of human trafficking and American women who have been imprisoned for prostitution. Director Sister Teresita Hennigan helps the women build a better future.*



PHOTO BY ANDREA CIPRIANI-MECCHI

*Sister Jean Rupertus collaborated with Ron Chance at Neumann University to establish a task force for human trafficking in the Wilmington diocese. Through her work as program director of House of Joseph II, a residence for people with AIDS, Sister Jean discovered that human trafficking was happening in the city of Wilmington where Russian women were being trafficked as prostitutes.*

# Trafficking: The Shocking Reality of Modern-Day Slavery

them. According to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website, trafficking is the fastest growing criminal industry in the world, and includes not only commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor such as domestic servitude, but also agricultural labor and sweatshop labor.

Given the prevalence of human trafficking and recognizing that every human person is created in God's divine image and is worthy of respect and dignity, the Sisters of St. Francis chose to take the concrete action of a corporate stand against human trafficking in 2008. The corporate stand states that "in light of our Christian tradition, our Franciscan charism, and basic principles of human life, we have a responsibility to speak out to do what we can to eradicate this blatant abuse of human dignity." For

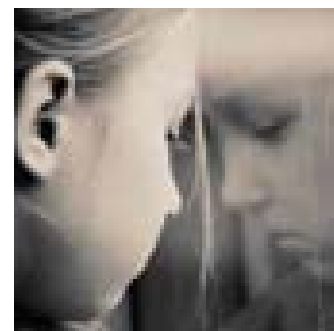
the past three years, the sisters have put those words into action by offering annual symposiums to educate others about human trafficking and to increase awareness of this issue. The sisters also pray for an end to trafficking, for those who are trafficked, and for the perpetrators of this crime. They serve as volunteer counselors and tutors for trafficking survivors and also support fundraising projects that benefit places like Dawn's Place, a safe house for victims in the Philadelphia area.

## Rebuilding the Lives of the Survivors

One of many sisters who volunteer at Dawn's Place is Sister Ann Forrest, an instructor at Neumann University. Having worked at a women's shelter in

Washington, D.C., Sister Ann said her motivation to volunteer comes from her firsthand experience with the suffering of women who don't have the resources or guidance they need. "I'm interested because I'm a woman and I'm enraged at the horrors imposed upon women," she said. "Our mission and commitment statements call us to have a particular love and care for women, children, and those who have no voice—those people who live on the margins. I've been privileged to work with those folks and I feel a strong calling to that."

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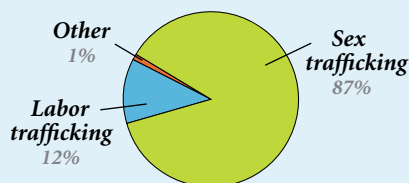




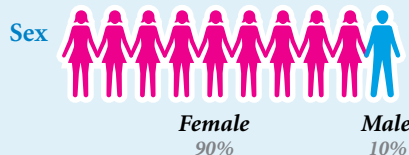
## At A Glance

Today, illegal sale of humans is a multibillion dollar industry tied with the illegal arms industry as the second largest criminal industry in the world, surpassed only by drug trafficking. Moreover, it is the fastest growing criminal industry.\*

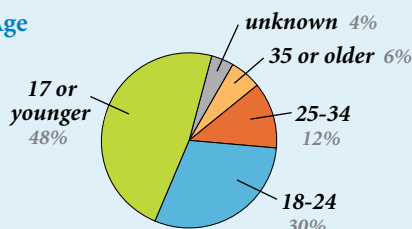
### Type of Trafficking



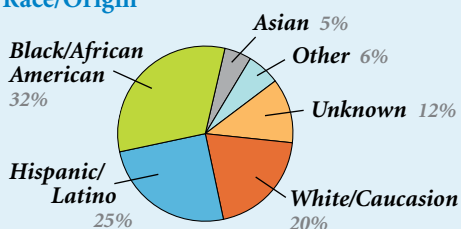
### Victim Characteristics



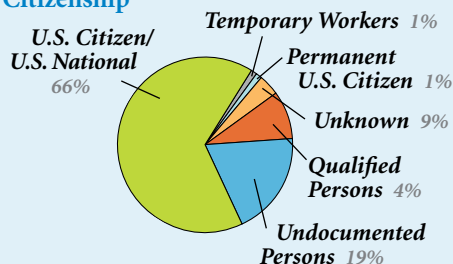
### Age



### Race/Origin



### Citizenship



\* Victim characteristics in cases confirmed by human trafficking high data U.S. task force between January 2008 and June 2010; according to the U.S. Department of Justice, Special Report (page 6) dated April 2011.

**“IN LIGHT OF OUR CHRISTIAN TRADITION, OUR FRANCISCAN CHARISM, AND BASIC PRINCIPLES OF HUMAN LIFE, WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO SPEAK OUT TO DO WHAT WE CAN TO ERADICATE THIS BLATANT ABUSE OF HUMAN DIGNITY.”**

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Through her volunteer work at the safe house, Sister Ann witnesses the extensive physical and emotional impact of trafficking on survivors. “I see a lot of depression with the women,” she said. “They are in poor physical condition. If they’ve been held in slavery, their captors don’t care about their health issues. Many have sexually transmitted diseases and possibly AIDS.”

Simona Botezatu, a candidate with the Sisters of St. Francis, worked with human trafficking victims at a safe house in California for two years. “I’m very passionate about working with victims of human trafficking because I saw the damage it does and what the women go through physically, emotionally, and psychologically,” Simona said. “Once they are in a safe place, they can take the time to recover, to heal, and be integrated into society but it is a long process and doesn’t happen overnight.”

Simona said it takes time for the women to trust those who are helping them because of the physical and emotional abuse they have experienced. “Once you gain their trust, they bloom like flowers,” she said. “You should see them doing things for themselves, making sense out of their brokenness. They are beautiful people, inside and out.”

Although Simona found it challenging to work with trafficking survivors, she learned many life lessons from them. “They taught me about what’s important in life such as family, respect, and dignity,” she said. “They taught me to be one with those who suffer and they made me a better person.”

### Educating Others

In addition to directly assisting victims of human trafficking, the Sisters of St. Francis are committed to raising awareness about this modern form of slavery. To bring attention to this issue, Ron Chance, an adjunct professor at Neumann University and former Director of Intelligence with the United States Department of Labor, Organized Crime, and Racketeering Division, worked with Sister Lynn Patrice Lavin, Cardinal Justin Rigali, and the

► **“We need to do something about it because if you see the statistics, it’s shocking. The more I learn about it, the more shocked I am,”** stated candidate, **Simona Botezatu.**





PHOTO BY SUZIE FITZHUGH

◀ *Sister Donna Fread is passionate about educating others about human trafficking in the Tacoma, Washington, area. She is working with a coalition of religious congregations to increase awareness of this crime which she says is happening “right in my backyard.”*



Archdiocese of Philadelphia to create an Anti-Trafficking Task Force in 2006. The purpose of the task force was to create a working relationship between law enforcement agencies and the nongovernmental agencies that provide services to trafficking victims. Ron also assisted Sister Jean Rupertus with establishing a similar task force in the Wilmington diocese.

While Ron gives many presentations on human trafficking for various community organizations, he also works directly with police departments to educate officers about trafficking. “Most law enforcement officers think that foreign women acting as prostitutes and working in massage parlors and go-go clubs are doing it because they want to do it,” Ron said. “The officers don’t realize that the women were promised another job as a nanny or teacher. When the women arrive, however, their documents are taken away. They’re beaten, raped, and forced into servitude.”

Many victims are told that if they go to the police, they’ll be arrested and deported.

“They’re also told that their family back in their home country will be killed if they don’t do what they’re told,” Ron explained. “Women go along with it to avoid being beaten and to avoid endangering their families.”

At Neumann University, educating students about human trafficking is integrated into the classroom and campus programs. Gail Corso, professor of Communication and Media Arts and English at Neumann, requires her students to do a research paper on human trafficking. In fact, many professors highlight trafficking as part of research projects as a way of connecting with the Franciscan tradition of reverence for each person. The students also collect toiletries, gift cards, and other items the women at Dawn’s Place may need. Last November the theme of Poverty Awareness Week was Global Slavery and Human Trafficking. As part of the week’s activities, Sister Ann Forrest presented a reflection on trafficking and on her experience at Dawn’s Place.

*continued on page 8*

Sister Donna Jo Repetti, Mrs. Linda Michalski, and the students of Benedictine Academy in Elizabeth, New Jersey, are making big strides in the education of young girls and the Stop Human Trafficking campaign. They produced a short ten-minute documentary video which they posted on YouTube and on their website which the students share with others to help raise awareness. But their work doesn’t stop there. Benedictine Academy and its staff and students are taking a stand against human trafficking by having their hearts united to the hearts of the children — H.U.H. They display the Blue Heart on the school’s website and Facebook pages in order to spread awareness to help keep children safe. This is all done in support of the United Nations Blue Heart Campaign against human trafficking, <http://www.unodc.org/blueheart/en/join-us.html>. The chilling truth about human trafficking also empowered the students to raise money to help build a school in the Sierra Leone—to educate young girls and to stop human trafficking. Benedictine Academy’s good work continues to save lives every day. To read more about the school’s efforts, visit their website: [www.benedictineacad.org/Campus-Ministry/Human-Trafficking](http://www.benedictineacad.org/Campus-Ministry/Human-Trafficking).

## APPROXIMATELY A THIRD OF CASES OPENED FOR INVESTIGATION WERE CONFIRMED TO BE HUMAN TRAFFICKING.

*continued from page 7*

### Working Together to Combat Human Trafficking

The Sisters of St. Francis are also addressing this issue on the West Coast. In Tacoma, Washington, Sister Donna Fread represents the Sisters of St. Francis in an anti-trafficking coalition of several religious congregations. The coalition and the University of Puget Sound cosponsored a conference on human trafficking that more than 150 people attended in November 2010. While the workshop was offered for free, the sisters accepted donations to support their efforts to combat human trafficking and to help victims. Sister Donna commented, “We were very excited about the large number of people who attended the conference and we were able to raise awareness about human trafficking and funding for future projects of the coalition.”

One of those projects focused on increasing awareness of human trafficking in the Tacoma area. The I-5 corridor which runs from Southern California through Oregon and Washington has one of the highest rates of teenage victims of human trafficking. The coalition placed Stop the Demand for Human Trafficking ads on the outside

of buses and displayed posters on the inside where people would see them as they traveled. The posters were translated into seven different languages.

The six-member coalition is planning a conference in October 2011 for professionals from Washington and Oregon who are helping human trafficking victims. “We don’t want to duplicate services,” Sister Donna said. “We want to bring these professionals together so they can inform others about the services their organizations provide and about resources that are available to victims who need help.” The coalition also plans to discuss human trafficking with the Tacoma police department and encourage police officers to take action to stop trafficking and to assist victims.

Sister Donna’s motivation comes from her congregation’s corporate stand. “You can’t just take a stand and not do anything about it,” she said. A recent trafficking incident in Tacoma was particularly disturbing to Sister Donna because the two victims

▼ *Bus ads in Tacoma, Washington, explain that no one should be forced into prostitution and that help is available to victims, regardless of their immigration status. Private donors paid for these ads along with several posters that were displayed inside the buses.*



were 13-year-old girls who were kidnapped by a woman, held in an apartment, and forced to have sex. “The woman advertised the girls online, met the men at a local donut shop, and brought them to her apartment,” Sister Donna said. “It was horrifying. Those young girls could have been relatives of mine.”

► *Educating young people about human trafficking, including students at Neumann University, is important to Sister Ann Forest, who teaches rhetoric and writing at Neumann, and Ron Chance, who teaches intelligence studies at the university. Through the Campus Ministry Office, students organize an annual collection for Dawn’s Place, a safe house where Sister Ann assists victims of human trafficking.*





## Sisters in Boston Form Anti-Trafficking Coalition

In the Boston area, Sister Betsy Goodwin, a member of the Sisters of St. Francis leadership team, helped organize the Leadership Conference of Women Religious Region 1's anti-trafficking coalition. The Sisters of St. Francis, along with the Sisters of St. Joseph of Boston, the Sisters of Notre Dame, the Marist Missionary Sisters, and the Sisters of the Holy Union met in 2008 to discuss human trafficking in the Boston area. Sister Betsy stated, "Our goal is to raise awareness throughout the Boston area and beyond about the reality and the horror that human trafficking is occurring in our own backyard and to engage and invite others to assist by whatever means they are able."

Although the coalition is small, Sister Betsy said the group has come together to raise awareness and to have an impact on a personal level with people who have been trafficked. The coalition organizes annual educational symposiums that consistently draw more than 200 attendees and hosts prayer vigils in January for National Human Trafficking Awareness Day. The group also advocates for anti-trafficking legislation in Massachusetts; provides direct support to government agencies; and offers education to parishes, schools, and community groups. A subcommittee of sisters is working on establishing a safe house in the Boston area.



### Taking a Stand = Taking Action

In taking a corporate stand against trafficking—against the illegal trade of human beings—the sisters continue to seek avenues through which to take action. "It's easy to take a corporate stand and sign your name to something," Sister Betsy said. "Without any action, that stand is empty and meaningless. Our mission and commitment is to speak on behalf of the voiceless and the poor and marginalized. And the many people who are trafficked really are the voiceless."

Simona Botezatu added that silence is not an answer to this worldwide problem. "We should speak out because human trafficking is so damaging, so ugly, so brutal," she said. "We need to love and support the victims as much as we can." ■

For more information or comments on this article, contact [goodnews@osfphila.org](mailto:goodnews@osfphila.org).

#### Sources:

[http://www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking/about/fact\\_human.html](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking/about/fact_human.html)

<http://www.usccb.org/mrs/trafficking/index.shtml>

## HOW YOU CAN HELP...

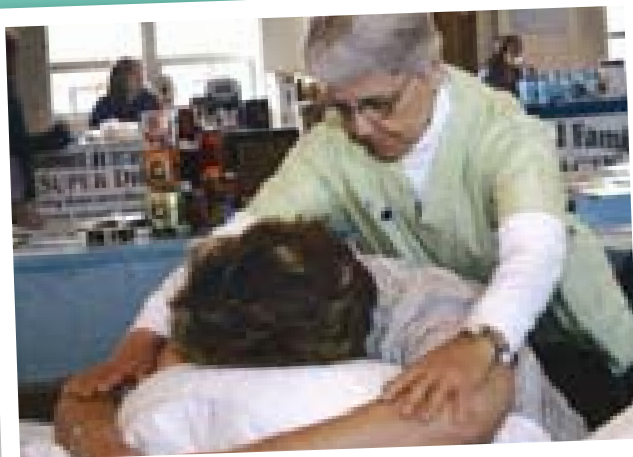
- Pray for the victims of human trafficking, many of whom are young children.
- Volunteer at a safe house that helps trafficking victims rebuild their lives. Many victims need assistance with earning a high school diploma, getting a job, and finding housing.
- Send donations to help human trafficking victims to the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia using the enclosed donation envelope. Please indicate if that donation is to be used for Dawn's Place in Philadelphia.
- There is plenty of information online about human trafficking and the impact it has on the lives of people around the world. Learn more about human trafficking by visiting [www.polarisproject.org](http://www.polarisproject.org), [www.unodc.org](http://www.unodc.org), [www.humantrafficking.org](http://www.humantrafficking.org), or [www.franciscansinternational.org](http://www.franciscansinternational.org).
- Contact your congressperson or senator to express your support for legislation that helps human trafficking victims and prohibits this egregious crime.

***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](mailto:goodnews@osfphila.org).*

# PEOPLE & PLACES

► Sister Catherine Ginther's calming demeanor and her expertise with massage helped parishioners to relax in an environment of peace of mind and body.



## PENNSYLVANIA

When St. Columbkille Parish in Boyertown held its first annual health fair, Sister Catherine Ginther was invited by her niece, a member of the parish's health ministry, to participate. When parishioners visited the parish hall after each Mass, Sister Catherine's massage table became a popular site. The offer of a neck, shoulder, or hand massage accompanied by soothing music and enriched by her innate calming personality helped to relax all who stopped for a visit. The health fair was indeed a great success and Sister Catherine's contribution was summed up by the parishioner who said, "I'm leaving here feeling better for having met her."



## PENNSYLVANIA

For the Franciscan Companions in Mission, 2011 has been a memorable year—the 25th anniversary of their founding. The year began in October 2010 when the companions hosted the Intercongregational Associate Directors Conference at the motherhouse in Aston. In January both companions and sisters gathered for Sister Anne Amati's presentation on St. John Neumann and the Redemptorist influence on the congregation—an influence that by extension impacted the companions as well. At this year's annual companion retreat, Sister Clare D'Auria, one of the moving forces behind the "birth" of the companion program, spoke on the topic "Make Hospitality Your Special Care." As usual, the retreat day was coupled with our Charism Day where Dan Shutte's presentation provided enrichment through music and reflection. The west coast companions gathered in Tacoma for another celebration and in June more than 40 companions joined the sisters at the congregational assembly for a special celebration of the 25th anniversary. The companions' annual picnic at the motherhouse also had a special celebratory flavor this year. And the culminating event of this memorable year? The closing of the anniversary year will be in October as companions from both east and west come together via Skype for a closing ritual!

## DELAWARE

For almost 50 years our sisters have ministered at Corpus Christi School in Wilmington, a school that has twice been recognized as a Blue Ribbon School of Excellence. In September 2011, the Corpus Christi property will house a new Catholic interparochial school, All Saints School, a joint effort of four parishes: Corpus Christi, St. Catherine of Siena, St. Mary of the Assumption, and St. Matthew. Addressing both the dwindling populations and financial challenges of parish schools, Bishop Francis Malooly sees the collaboration as a way to "sustain and enrich Catholic education for the children." The program, geared to grades K-8, will emphasize the STEM approach (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) in an extended school day.



## IRELAND

The Beacon of Light Counselling Centre in Dublin is doing more than "spreading the news." It's actually spreading out—size-wise. When the sisters who had lived in the congregations's two houses in the Neillstown section of Dublin returned to the States, Beacon of Light, was able to lease the properties which adjoined the center. Sister Patricia Kidd, family therapist and addiction counselor at Beacon of Light reports that the much needed expansion has provided the center with 12 counselling rooms. Two of these rooms are designated for child therapy. A third room is outfitted to meet the needs of clients who are disabled.



*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.*



◀ *By giving families a hand-up, not just a hand-out, Heifer International empowers them to turn lives of hunger and poverty into self-reliance and hope. Visit their website [www.heifer.org](http://www.heifer.org).*

## WASHINGTON

Donations from the sisters at St. Ann Convent in Tacoma to the Heifer Empowering Project resulted in the purchase of a water buffalo—a purchase which in turn will help others to achieve their dreams. Monies from the sale of milk and cheese will provide income which can then be used to educate needy families. The buffalo can also be used in working the fields. Ultimately the offspring of this water buffalo will be given to another family—and the cycle will continue. The sisters at St. Ann's also honored recently deceased Sister Columba Moynihan's 75th jubilee with a gift certificate to Heifer International. The money provided chickens, ducks, and rabbits to families who are poor.

## WASHINGTON

Sister Christine Still's summer plans don't seem to reflect the image of the "lazy, hazy days of summer." Her days focused on service projects with both junior and senior high school students. The junior high students volunteered at a local food bank, donated time in their parish, worked with Volunteer Chore Services, helped out at St. Francis House in Puyallup, and visited with the sisters at St. Ann Convent in Tacoma. Sister Tina's senior high students were part of Mission Trip with Nak Nu We Sha, the Yakima Nation Office for Family Services. The young people were busy doing yard work, painting, and making home repairs. Sister Tina also participated in Ascend, a leadership camp for high school students run by the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry in the Archdiocese of Seattle.

## WASHINGTON

Franciscan Companion in Mission, Joyce McCown, recently received the Myra Bradwell Award from the Gonzaga Woman's Law Caucus. The award is named for the first female attorney in the U.S. and is presented yearly to honor a Gonzaga Law School Alumni who has furthered women's and children's issues through the law. In nominating Joyce for this award, the Honorable Judge Linda Tompkins summarized Joyce's past and current contributions in eastern Washington: Washington State Minority and Justice Commission, State Bar Diversity Committee, Court of Appeals Division II Domestic Violence Resource Team, Court of Appeals staff lawyer, and Court Commissioner. As a member of the Franciscan Companions in Mission program, Joyce is a Companion in Faith and meets regularly with the companion group in Spokane for prayer and faith-sharing. For the past 10 years, she has also served on the congregation's Committee for Responsible Investment, sharing her expertise in reviewing and awarding grants and loans to nonprofit organizations that work with women and children.



*Sister Christine Still organized a group of high school students to participate in Mission Trip. The program is sponsored by Young Neighbors in Action, an arm of Catholic Ministry Development.*

# Following Where Life Leads:

## *A Wifely Beginning with A Sisterly Ending*

Sister Florence Petsch has several things in common with Maria Anna Boll Bachmann, foundress of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia. Both were married with children, both were widowed at a young age, and both women pursued their call to religious life and to serving God's people. Unlike her foundress, however, Sister Florence has lived long enough to become a grandmother and great-grandmother.

Sister Florence's personal history as a wife, mother, and grandmother makes her vocation to religious life especially unique. When her husband Donald died of a heart attack in 1976, Sister Florence prayed to God "every single day and hour." Her question to God: "Now that you took Don, what am I going to do with my life?"



*Inset: Sister Florence Petsch holds a family photo album that she brought with her when she entered the novitiate in 1979. During her novitiate, Sister Florence wrote letters to her daughter Martha who says she is proud of her mom for pursuing a religious vocation.*



The answer to that question came during a Cursillo retreat weekend a few years after her husband's death. Praying before the Blessed Sacrament, she asked God what she should do with her life. "The answer came to me," she said. "I heard the call to religious life and at first I thought, 'Oh, no, not me.' Before the hour was up, I was convinced that was the right way to go."

One of the first people she shared the news with was Sister Teresa Frawley. After Donald died, Sister Teresa, who worked with Sister Florence at St. Stephen's School in the 1970s, wanted to help her friend find a new spouse. "Sister Teresa was looking for a husband for me," Sister Florence said. "She was going to find somebody for me to marry. When I came back from the retreat, I told her I found him."

## Religious Life Prevails

Sister Florence's call to religious life did not surprise her daughter Martha McCoy. "She was always leaning toward the Lord more than anyone else I knew," said Martha who now lives in Spring Creek, Nevada, about a 10-hour drive from St. Stephens, Wyoming. "The only thing that surprised me was that she had to apply to become a sister. I just thought the Lord called you and you become a nun. I didn't know there was a process."

After her father died, Martha said her mom talked about remarrying but the call to religious life prevailed. "She loved my father dearly," Martha said. "I don't think she could have loved another man like that—except for Jesus."



*Sister Florence can log more than 100 miles on the road each week to bring Holy Communion to homebound residents like Anita Portwood. Gifted with a wonderful sense of humor, Sister Florence enjoys sharing her Franciscan joy with everyone she meets.*



Martha and her family, which includes husband Gayle; her children, Dawn and Daniel Joseph; and four grandchildren, are supportive of Sister Florence's religious vocation. "I was really proud that she chose that direction," Martha said. "My kids and grandkids think it's great because they can call her 'Sister Grandma.'"

## Transitioning from Motherhood to Sisterhood

Sister Florence entered the novitiate in 1979 at the age of 48. Transitioning from wife and mother to religious sister had its challenges. "It was difficult to make the change but I figured this is what the Lord wanted me to do," she said. "Every time I got in a tight spot, I prayed, 'You better get down here and help me or I'm going

home.' Before I knew it, I made my final vows—and I'm still here."

By the time Sister Florence left Wyoming to go to Aston for her novitiate training, her daughter was married with children.

"I really missed her. She wasn't able to see her grandkids but once she got back, it was like she was never gone," said Martha who kept in touch primarily by mail during her mother's novitiate years.

*continued on page 14*



*Generations of Catholic Arapahoe Indians have been buried in this cemetery at St. Stephen's Indian Mission. Sister Florence assists families with planning funeral Masses and helps them grieve the loss of a loved one.*



*Ethel Bell, an Arapahoe Indian, enjoys a game with a friend at the senior center on the Wind River Indian Reservation.*



“I DON'T THINK SHE COULD  
HAVE LOVED ANOTHER  
MAN LIKE THAT—EXCEPT  
FOR JESUS.”



*Spirituality is important to Native Americans who live on the Wind River Indian Reservation. The church is a focal point for members of the community who gather there for Mass and other celebrations.*

*Sister Florence is proud of her Native-American heritage, which she incorporated into her 25th jubilee celebration four years ago. A talented seamstress, Sister Florence displays the baby cradle board she created for her granddaughter.*



*continued from page 13*

“She was a very brave lady to enter the community in midlife,” Sister Teresa added. “That’s not an easy thing to do but she seemed to do it with a lot of grace and enjoyment.”

## The Gift of One of Their Own

Sister Florence serves as a pastoral assistant at St. Stephen’s Indian Mission on the Wind River Indian Reservation. A member of the Eastern Shoshone Indian tribe, she is a perfect fit for ministering with her fellow tribe members as well as with the Northern Arapaho Indians on the reservation. Her presence at St. Stephen’s carries on the impressive 119-year history of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia at the mission which the Jesuits established in 1884. She and Sister Teresa Frawley, who works at St. Joseph’s Church in Ethete, Wyoming, and Blessed Sacrament Church in Fort Washakie, Wyoming, continue to serve the spiritual needs of Native-American Catholics in the central region of the state.

## Lifting the Spirits of the Homebound

At age 79, Sister Florence has a busy schedule that includes Communion calls to people who are homebound or hospitalized, teaching a religious education class, laundering church linens, leading the rosary at wakes, and comforting those who are grieving the death of a loved one. “I enjoy helping people, bringing Communion, and visiting the elders,” Sister Florence said. “It’s important for them to feel they have their own sister here. They’re so happy to have someone pay attention to them.” Although her weekly visits entail traveling 100 miles roundtrip she looks forward to visiting the homebound on Thursdays and Fridays. “If I’m at home by myself, I feel really lonesome,” she said. “Visiting our people lifts my spirits and makes me feel like I’m doing something worthwhile.”

The spirits of the elders are also lifted by Sister Florence’s visits. Laura Lee

Whiteman, an Eastern Shoshone Indian who has known Sister Florence for 50 years, looks forward to receiving Communion and talking with her every Thursday. “She’s a good person to talk to because I get depressed easily,” Laura Lee said. “She walks into my house when I’m feeling troubled and when she leaves, I’m thanking Jesus for her and the Communion and looking forward to her next visit.”

Laura Lee also appreciates Sister Florence’s spiritual guidance as she grieves the loss of her husband and her son. “She knows what I’ve been going through,” Laura Lee said. “She gives me advice and tells me to trust in Jesus, to pray, and to hope. I have three other sons but only a mother knows the loss of a child.”

Patsy Dodge Lieuallen is also grateful for Sister Florence’s weekly visits. “If I have a question about my faith, I can ask her,” Patsy said. “She also brings me news from the mission which helps me stay connected to what is happening in the community.”

## Positioned to Render Invaluable Service

Sister Florence is equally comfortable with young children. “I like to teach the little ones because they’re so interested in learning about God and doing class projects,” she said. She also assists with preparing students to receive the sacraments of Penance, the Eucharist, and Confirmation. A talented seamstress, she occasionally sews a Communion veil or dress for the girls or a ribbon shirt which the boys wear when they receive their first Holy Communion.

Jesuit Father David Matzko, who served as pastor and administrator of St. Stephen’s Mission for six years and is now pastor of St. Isaac Jogues Parish in Rapid City, South Dakota, said Sister Florence has many gifts to offer others. “She brings a gift of acceptance and a nonjudgmental approach that says ‘I’m here to help you any way I can,’” he said. “She has a wonderful sense of humor. She’s very easygoing and puts people at ease. That’s a gift because not everyone can do that.”

Father Matzko feels that Sister Florence’s life experience makes her ministry invaluable to Native Americans. “I think it has helped her tremendously because she has

lived the life of the people she deals with,” Father Matzko said. “She knows the struggles of marriage, of raising a family, and of losing a spouse. She’s literally and ministerially one of them.”

## Celebrating 25 Years as a Sister of St. Francis

A highlight of Sister Florence’s years at the mission was the celebration of her 25th jubilee as a Sister of St. Francis at St. Stephen’s Church in July 2007. The Mass was unique, reflecting both Sister Florence’s Native American and religious heritage. The Eagle Drum Group from St. Stephen’s performed with Native American music and her Franciscan sisters sang religious songs. Franciscan Sister Celeste Crine led the processional with a liturgical dance and Schanna Littlesfield did traditional Indian dances during the processional, presentation of the gifts, and recessional.

Sister Florence’s family members were actively involved in the jubilee Mass. Her grandson D.J. McCoy and his wife Maite proclaimed the first and second readings and her daughter, son-in-law, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren presented the gifts.

At the reception Sister Florence added a personal creative touch by making cloth moccasins with colorful paper flowers for the table centerpieces and dream catchers as gifts for all the guests.



*Sister Florence Petsch and Sister Teresa Frawley gather for tea while they talk about their ministries with Native Americans in central Wyoming. Sister Teresa and Sister Florence worked together at St. Stephen’s School and have been friends for many years.*

## No Plans to Retire

Now in her 29th year as a Sister of St. Francis, Sister Florence said she is happy to be following the example of St. Francis by serving the poor, the forgotten, and the neglected. “I feel somebody has to be here to help the people,” she said. “I’ve always been attracted to helping people and I enjoy being with the people here.”

Elders like Laura Lee Whiteman are happy to hear that Sister Florence has no plans to retire. “She is like a guardian angel,” Laura Lee said. “She’s busy helping anyone who needs a helping hand. That is one woman who didn’t miss her calling.” ■

For more information or comments on this article, contact [goodnews@osfphila.org](mailto:goodnews@osfphila.org).

▼ *Sister Florence Petsch brings Communion to her cousin Marie Gavin who is in hospice care in Riverton, Wyoming. Although they are cousins, Sister Florence considers Marie to be a sister.*



▼ *In addition to serving the elderly, Sister Florence teaches preschool students during Sunday school at St. Stephen’s Indian Mission. She enjoys working with both young and old in her ministry.*



# SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

*Everyone has within a piece of good news.*

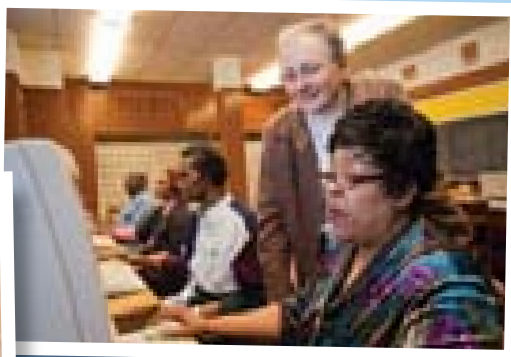
— Anne Frank (adapted)

See more good news at [www.osfphila.org](http://www.osfphila.org)



▲ Sister Mary Killoran, an “Alternatives to Violence Program” facilitator, meets regularly with prison inmates to teach them valuable communication and conflict resolution skills, to pray, and to talk about the challenges of being imprisoned.

▼ Sister Maggie Greco, a nurse practitioner, has been a vital part of the healthcare team at the Mary Howard Health Center—offering medical and psychiatric care to people who are homeless in Philadelphia.



▲ Sister Maria Orlandini, program director at Anna's Place, teaches computer classes to patrons of the center. With the help of the Sisters of St. Francis Foundation, the center was able to obtain grants for a passenger van and updated computers.

*With hearts filled with gratitude  
The Sisters of St. Francis*

# Thank You!

## 2010 Annual Report

SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS FOUNDATION

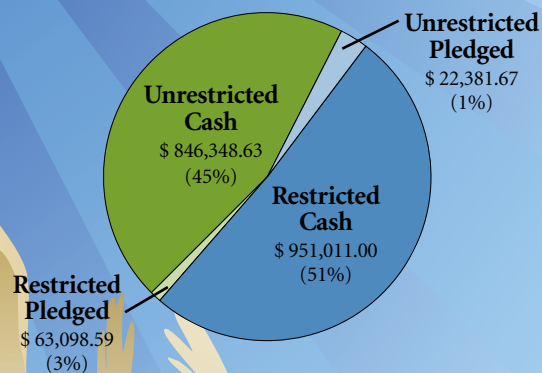
*In preparing this annual report, we are touched by the reality that a good steward is the caretaker of God's many gifts. You have been a gift to us despite the financial struggles of these days. Both those we serve and our sisters are grateful for your gifts and we thank God each day for your support. This report shows you how your funds are received.*

## Total Donations:

**\$ 1,882,839.89**

**Restricted:** \$ 1,014,109.59 (54%)

**Unrestricted:** \$868,730.30 (46%)



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

*From God we receive many gifts to use wisely to benefit those in need. Your continued support makes all this possible.*





▶ Your support helps to provide our sisters in Assisi House and St. Ann's with quality care, accessibility, privacy, and a strong sense of community where they know they are valued and loved.

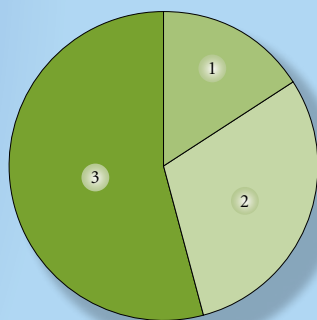


▶ Sister Loretta Francis Mann traveled to Haiti to share her hands and heart with the folks at the Haitian Health Foundation where she developed a strong bond with the children she cared for at the Mother Teresa Orphanage.

*The Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia assume operational costs of the foundation; therefore, every dollar that our donors give is used solely for the ministries and retirement.*

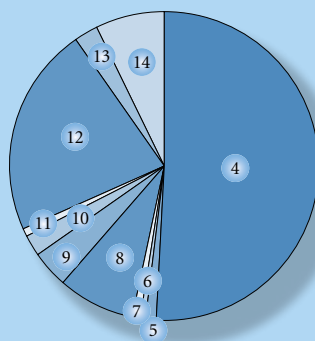
*All funds that are received in a fiscal year are disbursed at the end of that fiscal year.*

### Distribution of Ministry: Restricted for Retirement



- 1 General Retirement Fund \$ 101,438.76, (16%)
- 2 Assisi House \$ 185,234.95, (30%)
- 3 St. Ann Convent \$ 328,968.77, (54%)

### Distribution of Ministry: Restricted — Other



- 4 TCHS \$ 207,395.66, (51%)
- 5 Spiritual Ministries \$ 2,050.00, (1%)
- 6 Healthcare \$ 152.00, (0%)
- 7 Parish Ministries \$ 3,400.00, (1%)
- 8 Assisi House \$ 33,520.00, (8%)  
*Donor Wall and Equipment*
- 9 Other \$ 14,745.00, (4%)
- 10 Memorial Garden \$ 9,470.00 (2%)
- 11 Foreign Ministries \$ 5,031.00, (1%)
- 12 Shelter & Social Ministries \$ 85,771.94, (22%)
- 13 St. Ann Chapel \$ 10,000.00, (2.5%)
- 14 Education \$ 26,931.51, (7%)

*In FY 2010, 100% of Unrestricted Funds were used for Retirement.*



## In Memoriam

Sister Nora O'Mahony  
(formerly Sister Kyran)  
February 20, 2011

Sister John Marie Stack  
February 24, 2011

Sister Regina Desmond  
(formerly Sister Marie Andrew)  
April 13, 2011

Sister Bernadette McInnis  
(formerly Sister St. Therese)  
April 15, 2011

Sister Sheila Casey  
(formerly Sister John Julia)  
May 14, 2011

Sister Columba Moynihan  
May 25, 2011

### EXPLANATION OF RESTRICTED

**CATEGORIES** **TCHS:** Large campaign gift to The Catholic High School; **Spiritual Ministries:** Spiritual Centers west and east; **Healthcare:** St. Anthony, Pendleton; **Parish and Campus Ministries:** Emmitsburg, Sr. Loretta Schaff; St. Anthony, Baltimore; **Assisi House Donor Wall and Equipment;** **Other:** OLA Chapel; St. Joseph, Ringwood; Mission Fund; Vocations; Sisters of St. Francis General Fund; **Memorial Garden:** Trees, Benches, and Bricks; **Foreign Ministries:** Africa and Haiti; **Shelter and Social Ministries:** Anna's Place, Human Trafficking (Benedictine Academy and Dawn's Place), Hispanic Ministry (Delaware County and Portland, Oregon), Intercommunity Peace and Justice (Seattle), St. Mary Franciscan Shelter, St. Joseph Family Center, Prison Ministry (Delaware and Maryland), Sr. Donna Fread's Ministry; Transitions, Discretionary Fund for the Poor; **St. Ann Chapel; Education** (Computer education at Anna's Place)

# Focus

► Mike's enjoyment of his work incorporates a blend of present realities and past memories such as serving meals in a huge tent on the lawn during general chapter or coordinating meals in off-campus locations after the motherhouse was evacuated.



## MIKE SABOLCIK

"AND THIS IDEA OF 'SECOND TIME AROUND'—'COMING HOME AGAIN,'" MIKE CONCLUDED. "IT MAKES IT SPECIAL."

The concept "You can't go home again" might be true in some cases but not in Mike Sabolcik's experience. Mike began working in food services at Our Lady of Angels convent in 1995 under the employ of Service Master. In 1997 Service Master's contract was not renewed and Mike left OLA. When Service Master moved out of food service, Mike's manager asked Mike where he had been happiest. Mike's answer?—"With the sisters." The manager suggested that Mike inquire about a position at OLA. Although he felt it was pointless, Mike wrote to Sister Kathleen Parisi, who was then administrator of the convent. To his surprise, Sister Kathy invited him for an interview and he was hired in May 2000. When he stopped by the dining room for a quick "hello," the reaction was electric—"There's Mike!" and "Mike's coming back!" Mike knew he was "home."

That concept of "home" continues to hold significance for Mike—and his own innate sense of hospitality coalesces with the sisters' own efforts to extend hospitality to all who visit OLA. Mike particularly enjoys the more people-centered activities—setting up for functions and being on hand while the function is in process. "I get excited about seeing the family come together for big occasions," Mike said, referring to jubilee celebrations, gathering days, and retreats. Mike also enjoys preparing for visits from the "neighbors"—especially the students from Neumann University who sometimes come to share a meal with the sisters. For Mike this building of relationship is what family and relationship are all about.

Mike's life outside of OLA revolves around his own family. His wife Sandy is an external case manager for a nursing home. Their daughter, Sara, 20, is a sophomore at Kutztown University and is preparing to be a secondary education teacher.

Mike sums up his feelings about working at OLA in two words: "You're appreciated!" He feels that others don't realize the effect that appreciation can have on employees.

"And this idea of 'second time around'—'coming home again,'" Mike concluded. "It makes it special."



▲ Mike's close relationship with his own family, wife Sandy and daughter Sara, extends to his relationship with his OLA family—both with the sisters, their guests, and fellow employees.



◀ The smooth running operation of large functions which appear deceptively simple is possible only because of staff like Mike and his coworkers (seen here with Sally, Anthony, Sue, Marina, Al, and Celestine.)



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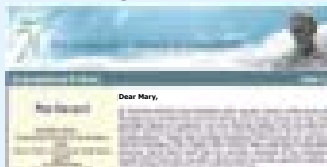
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- ☐ Companion Program ☐ Franciscan Spiritual Centers (select one): ☐ Aston, PA ☐ Milwaukie, OR
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## SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS FOUNDATION



## What can you do with ten bucks? Get lucky and win more bucks!

### Tenth Annual Raffle

Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia

Consider asking family members, friends, and coworkers to support this important fundraiser. Your donation will help the sisters provide for their elderly members and enable them to continue their ministries.



**Grand Prize: \$5,000**

*Seller's Prize: \$125*

**Second Prize: \$3,000**

*Seller's Prize: \$100*

**Third Prize: \$2,000**

*Seller's Prize: \$75*

**Fourth Prize: \$1,000**

*Seller's Prize: \$50*

**Fifth Prize: \$500**

*Seller's Prize: \$25*

**Sixth Prizes: \$250**

*Seller's Prize: \$15*

**Seventh Prizes (3): \$150 each**

*Seller's Prize: \$10*

**\$10/book of six tickets;  
or \$2/each ticket**

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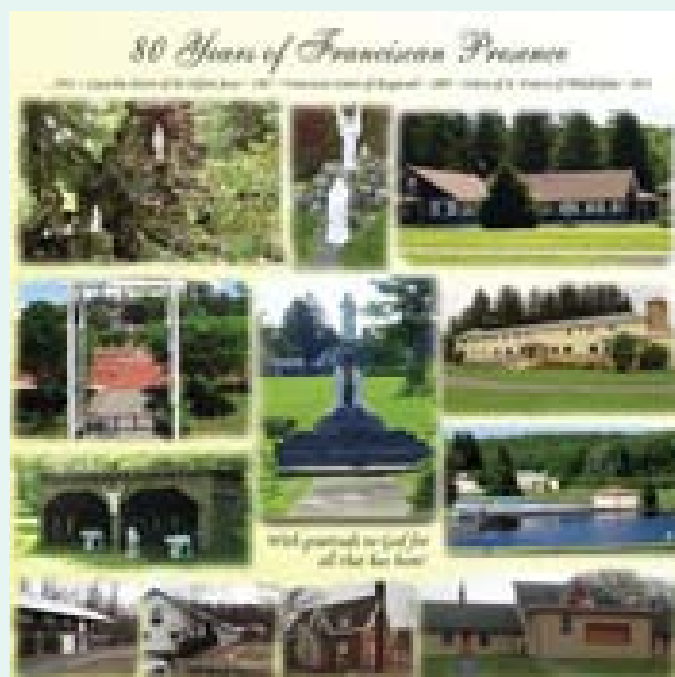
## How Green Was Our Assembly?

In mid-June the sisters gathered at Neumann University's Mirenda Center for an assembly. Assemblies are held midpoint between congregational chapters and provide an opportunity for members to assess how they have implemented chapter directives and to determine directions leading to the 2014 chapter. While the 2011 assembly followed a format similar to earlier gatherings, something unique marked this year's gathering. The assembly was green—totally green! Although regular recycling practices were in effect, the major emphasis was on composting—a practice already in effect at the motherhouse. Compostable materials provided by food services at Our Lady of Angels Convent and by Greenline Paper included “biotuf” trashcan liners, flatware made from potato starch, and compostable plates, cups, lids, and salad service. For available compostable products, visit [www.greenlinepaper.com](http://www.greenlinepaper.com).



*Since the late 1800s, our sisters have been ministering to the people of the Northern Arapaho tribe at St. Stephen's Parish in Wyoming. Sisters Clementina, Bernard, and Adriana, shown here, became very close to the*

*families on the reservation during their time of ministry and today the same can be said about Sister Florence Petsch. An Arapaho Indian herself, Sister Florence shares her unique story (page 12) about how she became a sister after being a widow and a mother and how she wound up back in Wyoming ministering with her own people.*



## Remembering the Blessing of Mt. St. Francis

*“A time to mourn and a time to dance; a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them.”* To the sisters gathered on June 4 at Mt. St. Francis in Ringwood, these words from Ecclesiastes held a special poignancy. The gathering marked the closing of the Ringwood property that had long been home to the Franciscan Sisters of Ringwood, a congregation that merged with the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia in 2003. The sisters shared prayers of gratitude for all that Mt. St. Francis represented—a place of blessing and of opportunity, a place of community and of faithful witness. A pilgrimage through the grounds and the various buildings recalled memories and evoked a sense of history, creating a renewed awareness that this was indeed “holy ground.”