

Volume 26.2 Fall/Winter 2023

NEWS

A Publication of THE SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS OF PHILADELPHIA

Also in this issue:

- 'The Last of Her Kind' — A Legacy of Teaching in the West
- People & Places
- Foundation Annual Report

The Path Forward: Sharing Our Charism

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

*Go, make disciples of all nations...
Teach them to observe all that I have commanded you;
and lo, I am with you always.*

Matthew 28: 19-20

The “Great Commission” (Mt. 28:19-20) once again finds a loving response through our sisters highlighted in this Good News. With hearts on fire with our charism, they work to fulfill our mission in the world.

Sister Maureen Fox embodies the essence of what it means to be a teacher. While it is important for a teacher to have a mastery of skills, the artistry of teaching is to awaken curiosity in the minds and hearts of her students. By enkindling a love for learning, she hopes her students will discover that the quest for knowledge of God, themselves, and all of creation is the most important gift of education. Filled with this love of learning, students can become teachers and make a difference in the lives of those they meet along their paths. Sister Maureen lives our charism as a sister of St. Francis of Philadelphia—being “in a loving relationship with others,” teaching students to explore the wonders of nature, and reflecting God’s love through her presence in the details of their lives when they need her most.



**Sister Theresa Firenze, OSF
Congregational Minister**

Our charism ministers, Sisters Diane Tomkinson, Joanne Clavel, and Anne Amati, along with Colleen Collins, are entrusted with the sacred mission to challenge us to live as who we profess to be. Through each of these individual’s specific focus, concrete ways are presented to us so that we will intentionally live our Franciscan charism here and now. The Sisters of St. Francis, our companions, and our partners in our sponsored ministries are commissioned to cultivate awareness, accept responsibility, and be called to accountability. Nurturing healthy, loving relationships, investing time on learning how we can contribute to making our world a better place, and choosing to change our behaviors are pathways to preserving our beliefs and renewing Mother Earth.

What legacy will you leave to those who come after you? What road will you choose to travel? May you be so inspired to venture onto “the road less traveled.” (Robert Frost)

Go!

May God Bless You Always and in All Ways!

Theresa Firenze, OSF



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Charism is a word not often used in everyday conversation outside of religious life. Charism is the essence of who a person is, the spirit and values that guide them. We share our Franciscan charism with others to continue a path forward and strengthen our relationship with God, community, and Mother Earth.

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Sister Maureen Fox, an educator, mentor, and friend to many, has decided to take off her teaching hat. Her retirement from Holy Redeemer Catholic School in Portland, Oregon, marks the end of an era that began in the 1800s—the congregation's education ministry in the West.

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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 twice per year (spring/summer and fall/winter) by the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia. We welcome your feedback and comments; correspondence should be addressed to *Good News* at the address above.

Visit our website! www.osfphila.org



PREPRESS:
PLEASE CHECK
THIS DATA

The energy used in the production of this document with 100% recycled paper and 100% recycled ink are:
Trees saved: 18,266; Lbs solid waste not generated: 2,021; Lbs net greenhouse gases prevented: 3,979; BTUs energy not consumed: 30,459,240

On the cover: Our charism as Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia calls us to live in loving relationship with others, to care for creation, and to see all as a reflection of God's love. Our mission will carry on into the future because we share these values with those to whom we minister, with our fellow sisters, with like-minded young adults, and with our Franciscan companions.



People from all walks of life have found partnering with the sisters to further their mission very fulfilling. From spiritual development, to advocacy, to boots-on-the-ground help where it is needed—they have found deep rewards both internally and externally.

FROM MERRIAM-WEBSTER

charism
/'ker,izəm/
noun

an extraordinary power (as of healing) given a Christian by the Holy Spirit for the good of the church

The Path Forward:



Everything we are as Franciscan sisters begins with our foundress, Mother Francis Bachmann. Moved by the charism of Saints Francis and Clare of Assisi, she formed a religious congregation based on their values. Today, our founding spirit is shared and supported, not only by the women who have professed vows to become Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, but also by those joining in our mission over the years, including the Franciscan Companions in Mission who live the mission of the sisters in their own vocations.

“Everything we are as Franciscan sisters is based on the gift of the charism of Saints Francis and Clare of Assisi and the vision of our foundress, Mother Francis Bachmann,” said Sister Anne Amati, OSF. “When you follow somebody who has received this gift from the Holy Spirit, it becomes your gift” to be given for the common good. Charism, a word not often used in everyday conversation outside of religious life, refers to the charisma of a person who receives inspiration from God and then draws others to adopt certain values. It is thought to be sent at a time when the world most needs it, which raises the question: in today’s world, what about the Franciscan charism is most vital?

“There’s a sense of something transformative happening in our culture, our world, our religious life,” said Sister Diane Tomkinson, OSF. “It may not look the way it looked in the past, so we must be willing to ‘make the path by walking.’ How do we bring the gift of our spirituality as Franciscans to witness today?”

The Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia summarize their congregational charism in their Mission Statement, as “living as sister

At the 2023 Gathering Day and Vow Renewal, the charism collaborative circle members joined together to present ongoing formation to sisters, companions, and staff members on the issue of racism. Programs such as this help to spread our Franciscan mission of care for the entire human family and respect for every person. It is just one example of how all areas of our charism are interconnected.



Upon taking vows as Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, Sister Maria Anna Dela Paz (top) and Sister Ann Dutrow say “yes” to the gift of the Franciscan charism that has been born in their hearts.

Sharing our Charism

✠ “HOW DO WE BRING THE GIFT OF OUR SPIRITUALITY
AS FRANCISCANS TO WITNESS TODAY?”

with one another, with the entire human family, and with all creation.” Seeing all as a reflection of God’s love and dedicated to bringing hope and joy to those in need, the congregation lives out this mission by the relationships they foster and by promoting justice, peace, and care for creation.

Working Together

Having begun her new role as charism engagement minister in August 2021, Sister Diane “makes the path by walking” in more ways than one. The congregation is approaching sharing our charism with others using a new model in the form of “charism collaborative circles.” While each area has its own particular focus, the overlapping circles symbolize how “everything is interconnected,” to quote Pope Francis.

In thinking of how the collaborative circles function, one might imagine the petals of a flower. One petal—Sister Diane’s—focuses on helping both religious and lay people through discernment (a prayerful way of making decisions) and reaching out to young adults to allow them to share in and experience the Franciscan charism. The other petals—led by Sister Joanne Clavel, OSF, Sister Anne, and Colleen Collins—focus on justice, ongoing formation, and the companion relationship, respectively. Each petal supports and enhances the beauty of the Franciscan charism for all.

Engaging Others

“What inspires me in teaching and studying our charism is the conviction that we’re in a period of tremendous historical change,” said Sister Diane, who shares how

the discernment piece thematically, runs throughout her ministry. In all things, she helps people uncover what God is calling them to do. In terms of religious life, she speaks with women who are wondering if becoming a sister is right for them. Is God calling them, and if so, to what congregation?

Discernment is also a process that’s vital to lay people; to address this need, Sister Diane gives “*Life Decisions: Discernment in the Franciscan Spirit*” retreats that are open to everyone. One woman recently attended a retreat because she was struggling with whether to leave her current job. “Before the retreat, she had pretty much decided she’d stay in her current role,” said Sister Diane. During the retreat, though, this woman experienced an internal shift.

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Sister Joanne Clavel, charism justice minister, oversees the justice and advocacy efforts of the congregation.



Sister Diane Tomkinson, charism engagement minister, facilitates engagement and outreach with young adults, women discerning religious life, coworkers, and companions. She also oversees the collaboration of the charism circle members.



The congregation is approaching sharing our charism with others using a new model in the form of “charism collaborative circles.” While each area has its own particular focus, the overlapping circles symbolize how “everything is interconnected,” to quote Pope Francis. Each petal of the Charism “flower” focuses on connecting religious, lay people, and young adults to allow them to share in and experience the Franciscan charism. Each petal supports and enhances the beauty of the Franciscan charism for all.

Justice Minister

Engagement Minister

Initial Formation Minister

Charism

Director of Companions

Ongoing Formation Minister

Colleen Collins, director of companions, oversees and administers the Franciscan Companion in Mission relationship, connecting lay persons with the sisters in a meaningful way.



Sister Anne Amati, ongoing formation minister, develops resources for ongoing formation within the congregation, coordinates Jubilee and Mother Bachmann celebrations, and connects with and shares resources from the Franciscan Federation.



“BUILDING ON THE BELIEF THAT CHARISM IS GIVEN TO SOMEONE TO BENEFIT THE ENTIRE WORLD, IT’S IMPORTANT TO THINK BEYOND THE CONGREGATION’S VOWED MEMBERS.”

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“By the end of the retreat, she felt strongly called to leave that job. She listened to the call and found what she now describes as her ‘ideal job!’”

To help further engage young adults—in social and ecological justice, service, advocacy, and in mutual relationship with our sisters—Sister Diane hopes to hire a young adult engagement coordinator. Prior to Covid, the sisters sponsored a volunteer year where young adults lived in community with one another and served at Red Hill Farm and various other ministries where our sisters serve. Through this relationship, the volunteers grew in their Franciscan spirituality and gained a deeper understanding of their call to live the Gospel. The congregation is currently exploring what might be the next iteration of this relationship.

Mutual Relationship

Building on the belief that charism is given to someone to benefit the entire

world, it’s important to think beyond the congregation’s vowed members. The Franciscan Companions in Mission is a group of lay men and women who seek to live the Franciscan charism and support the sisters in their various ministries. Their director, Colleen Collins, was herself a professed sister for about 15 years. She eventually made the difficult decision to leave so she could adopt her eldest son. God, however, had plans to keep Colleen involved with her Franciscan sisters. She began attending a companion in faith group and when the director retired, she applied and got the job. As director of the companions, Colleen shares the charism with both companions in faith and companions in prayer.

Welcoming the Franciscan charism into their lives, companions in faith are organized in groups of companions and sisters who pray together, share faith together, participate in ongoing formation, and work on the congregation’s corporate



The charism collaborative circle members meet regularly to discuss the ways in which their work overlaps and learn how they can support each other on joint efforts.

The result is evident in all the ways people connect with the sisters and with the Franciscan charism.

YOUNG ADULT ENGAGEMENT



JUSTICE INITIATIVES



stands. Above all, they enjoy their time together. Marge Mikulski, a long-time companion shared, “Being a Franciscan companion has given my life direction. It is often the pacesetter for my decisions, brings me peace, and usually calls me to remember what is important in life: ‘that we love one another’ and that we are brothers and sisters to one another.”

The faith groups help companions discover how their gifts can be applied to better serve God. For example, during a recent retreat, Colleen found herself next to an environmental scientist. As they tackled their assignment—writing a letter to “Brother Fire”—Colleen became aware of this woman’s deep environmental knowledge. She told her, “You need to be on our Care for Creation committee!”

The companions in prayer embrace the Franciscan spirit in a slightly different way. They support the mission of the sisters through their commitment to daily prayer for the sisters and their intentions.

The companion relationship is a mutually beneficial one. “It’s also a benefit to the sisters, a way of keeping the spirit alive and sharing their charism with the broader world,” Colleen said. Sister Anne agreed, “The companions help to energize

the sisters. There’s a mutual building up of one another that the group fosters.”

Circle of Justice

With struggles surrounding climate change, gun violence, and racism (to name a few), it’s more important than ever to reflect on how to live and spread our Franciscan values—how we respect and honor individuals and the planet. “We have a long history of working for justice both for those whose voice is not heard and for our sister, Mother Earth,” said Sister Joanne, charism justice minister.

One particularly memorable moment for Sister Joanne came in May 2019. Sister Kathy Dougherty, OSF, congregational minister at the time, attended a meeting of leaders of women religious in Rome. One agenda item was a discussion of Pope Francis’ encyclical, *Laudato Si’*, which focuses on care for all people and for the natural world. “The meeting was livestreamed, and the discussion energized me, resonated with me, and invited me to be more involved,” Sister Joanne said. “I was excited by what I heard; how religious congregations were planning to work together to implement *Laudato Si’*. This led me to the Care for Creation committee

FRANCISCAN COMPANIONS



and other justice ministries, and eventually to become the justice minister for the congregation.”

Sister Joanne oversees the justice and advocacy efforts of the congregation and collaborates with various committees. One such committee is the Dismantling Racial Discrimination Committee, which focuses on combatting racism in all its forms. The

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Connecting with young adults is a vital part of sharing our Franciscan charism. From teaching in elementary schools, to inviting young ladies from The Catholic High School of Baltimore for the annual Franciscan Charism/Leadership Development program, to the relationship developed through our Franciscan Volunteer program, our future lies with passing all we have learned and value on to the younger generation.



YOUNG ADULT ENGAGEMENT

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sisters recognize the need to look within their own hearts and meditate on the words, “To change the world I must start with me.” As the white adoptive mother of four Black children, Colleen is very involved with this committee. Racism is so pervasive that it’s “like the air we breathe,” Colleen said. “We don’t realize how much it impacts us and how we then interact with the world.”

Since the charism team participates in each other’s committees and searches for points of intersection in their different sectors, for Gathering Day 2023, all agreed that racism should be the main topic for discussion and reflection.

Circle of Growth

The need for our sisters to continually grow in awareness of issues like racism is a component of ongoing formation, the continual internalization of the mission of Christ in one’s life. This focus is where Sister Anne Amati, the ongoing formation minister, comes in. “I’m trying to use the gifts I’ve been given,” said Sister Anne, who feels that all the work she’s done since entering the community has been, in one way or another, part of ongoing formation. In terms of her work, she has drawn considerable inspiration from the letter of Pope John Paul II on consecrated life. In it, he says that “because it aims at the transformation of the whole person,

it’s clear that the commitment to formation never ends.” This line struck Sister Anne. “It’s important because sometimes as we grow older, we think ‘what more can I hear/learn?’” she said. “Pope John Paul also wrote that, ‘at every stage of life, consecrated persons must be offered opportunities to grow in their commitment to the charism.’” This prompts Sister Anne to minister to older sisters who might otherwise feel that their time for formation has passed.

FRANCISCAN COMPANIONS



Our Franciscan Companions in Mission are contemporary examples of God’s loving providence, enabling the journey to continue. Companions from all over the country learn about Franciscan spirituality and charism alongside the sisters, incorporate the teachings in their own lives, and take what they have learned and experienced with them on their life journey. Many choose to give back to the sisters by sharing their gifts, for example, the Trenton companion group, put on a Christmas program for the sisters at Assisi House.

JUSTICE INITIATIVES



In her role, Sister Anne heads up two committees: one dedicated to formation and the other to Mother Francis Bachmann, the foundress of the Sisters of Saint Francis of Philadelphia.

One morning, Sister Anne woke up and was struck with inspiration when she realized that Mother Francis was born in 1824, founded the congregation in 1855, and died in 1863. This meant that 2023, 2024, and 2025 could all be seen as anniversaries (including the 200th anniversary of Mother Francis' birth). She presented this idea to leadership and, to celebrate, special events have been planned for each year. Continuing to honor Mother Francis Bachmann and to learn more about her life has further rooted the sisters in their charism.

The congregation collaborates with many different organizations in our justice and peace efforts. We invite our sisters, companions, staff members, coworkers, and others to join us in prayer, action, and outreach to help those who are economically poor, marginal, and oppressed.



Full Circle

"The early Franciscan movement really was a *movement*," said Sister Diane. "Both religious and lay people were inspired by Saints Francis and Clare to live the Gospel life." Sister Diane revels in the loving relationship the Franciscan charism creates with God, among sisters, and with all people and creation. The collaborative circles that serve to create charism engagement, while connected, each spread out and reach people in different ways.

Above all, what Sister Diane would most like to impart is that "We are joyful Franciscans who have something to offer the world today. It's a Franciscan moment: this ministry looks at how we Sisters of Saint Francis can participate in that moment." ■

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

HOW YOU CAN HELP...

- If you are a lay man or woman who seeks to live the Franciscan charism and would like to support the sisters in their work, **consider becoming a Franciscan Companion in Mission**. Through the companion groups, you'll find opportunities for prayer, faith sharing, ongoing formation, and advocacy to address issues that are vital to Franciscans and the larger world.
- **By giving to the charism collaborative circles, your gift could provide a life-changing experience for a young person** who feels called to engage with the Franciscan charism in a deeper way. Support the sisters' emerging young adult initiatives around intentional community, volunteer service, and eco-justice.
- Facing some big decisions in your life? **Use the Franciscan process of discernment to discover what you are most called to do**. Consider attending a retreat such as Sister Diane's "*Life Decisions: Discernment in the Franciscan Spirit*" retreat to go even deeper with this process.
- In thinking of the words "To change the world I must start with me," **meditate on which issues you feel most need to be addressed today**. What can you do to help address those issues?
- Remember that **ongoing formation is a part of life, throughout one's entire life**. Seek out opportunities where you can reflect and be inspired, so that you can continually internalize the mission of Christ at every stage of your personal development.

PEOPLE & PLACES



◀ Several Sisters of St. Francis joined the assembly line to package food for the Rise Against Hunger Project in Aston.



DELAWARE

Published in the April edition of the “Wazzup in the Ministry” newsletter for the Ministry of Caring in Wilmington, Delaware, was an announcement of **Sister Kathleen Pollard’s** retirement. Sister Kathleen, who originally joined the staff of Guardian Angel Child Care Center in Wilmington in 1998, “has been a talented and stalwart asset,” the author wrote. “She managed the challenging, once-in-a-lifetime task of enacting strict health and safety procedures allowing the center to reopen after the Covid-19 pandemic. During its closure, she pitched in as the administration building’s afternoon receptionist. ‘Sister Kathleen has done a really wonderful job and will be missed,’ said Brother Ronald Giannone OFM, Cap., founder of the Ministry of Caring. As she retires in June, we wish her the best and hope her plan to volunteer with children is as rewarding as her ministry tenure.”



Sister Kathleen Pollard comforts a child at the Guardian Angel Child Care Center.

PENNSYLVANIA

On Saturday, April 30, 2023, a group of 150 people gathered at the Aston Library Community Center in a **Rise Against Hunger Project**. The group represented Aston Presbyterian Church, Imago Dei Metropolitan Community, Mount Hope United Methodist Church, Resurrection Episcopal Church, the St. Joseph Knights of Columbus, St. Timothy Lutheran Church, and the Sisters of St. Francis. The Rise Against Hunger Project assembles nutritional packaged meals to be sent where needed around the world. The long-range goal is to make people independent so they can help themselves and food is a step in that direction. Groups were also seated to weigh and seal each package. When 2,000 packages were complete, a large bell was rung. In a little over an hour, 20,080 packages were boxed. This was a great way to find unity among the churches in a project to feed the hungry!

*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.*



WASHINGTON

A *Fig Tree* benefit lunch was held in March 2023. This hybrid event was offered in person at Gonzaga University in Spokane or via Zoom. With the theme of “Sharing Resources: Transforming Lives,” the benefit celebrated the 50th anniversary of the highly valued “Resource Directory: Guide to Congregational and Community Resources.” The benefit provides funding for *The Fig Tree* newspaper, the annual resource directory, its website, social media, interfaith dialogues, legislative conference, and other educational events. Thirty hosts gathered friends and colleagues at tables to share the story of over 50 years of publishing the resource directory. Our own **Sister Pat Millen** was a table host for this benefit. A video overview of the history and impact of the directory on the community and people is being created and will be released soon. Our sisters enjoyed the lunch and offered congratulations to *The Fig Tree* staff for their contributions over the past 50 years.



DELAWARE

Sister Kathleen Flood was recently interviewed on an episode of the podcast Catholic Forum. This podcast is produced by the Diocese of Wilmington, which includes the State of Delaware and the

nine counties of Maryland’s Eastern Shore. On this episode of Catholic Forum, after Joe Owens gives the latest news from *The Dialog*, Sister Kathleen Flood spoke about her ministry as a case manager at the new Catholic Charities Disaster Relief and

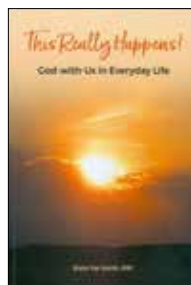
Recovery Program. Listeners meet Sister Kathy and learn about a program that is helping Wilmington residents in the 11th Street Bridge area. Scan the QR code with your smartphone to access the podcast with Sister Kathy Flood on Catholic Forum.



Shown L-R: Becky McHargue, Sister Elaine Thaden, Sister Pat Millen, Mona Griffin, Sister Patty Novak, Theresa Fletcher

PENNSYLVANIA

Sister Pat Smith recently published a book entitled *This Really Happens: God-with-us in Everyday Life*. It deals with how memories of experiences throughout our lives awaken us to the reality of God’s presence with and among us. It encourages the read-



er to become aware of glimpses of God that have permeated their lives throughout the years. The book can be obtained with a donation of \$10-15. All monies received will go directly to the Sisters of St. Francis

Foundation to support our retired sisters and our ministries that assist the poor. To request a copy of the book, please call (610) 558-7715 or email OSFF@osfphila.org. Those who live nearby can pick up their book and make their donation at the front desk of Our Lady of Angels Convent, Monday through Saturday from 9 AM to 3 PM. Those at a distance are asked to please include an additional \$4 for postage when

making their donation to The Sisters of St. Francis Foundation, 609 S. Convent Road, Aston, PA, 19014.



WASHINGTON

In a message posted on the City of Puyallup — Government Facebook page, the city council honored **Sister Patricia Michalek**. “At the April 19, 2023, City of Puyallup Council meeting, we read a proclamation and presented a Key to the City to a very special person in our community. Sister Pat Michalek, executive director of St. Francis House, was bestowed with a Key to the City for her 22 years of dedication to serving our community and inspiring others with a generous heart. We recognize Sister Pat Michalek for her important work in our community, serving individuals and families in need, and making Puyallup a better place. Thank you, Sister Pat!” To read more about Sister Pat’s ministry with St. Francis House read the spring/summer edition of *Good News*.



Read more about Sister Patricia’s ministry with St. Francis House in the spring/summer edition of *Good News*.

✠ “I HAVE ALWAYS APPROACHED
TEACHING AS AN OPPORTUNITY
AND A PRIVILEGE TO JOURNEY
WITH YOUNG PEOPLE.”

► Sister Maureen Fox
with principal Deirdre
McPheeters at Holy
Redeemer Catholic
School, where she has
been a staple for the
past 25 years.



The Last of Her Kind— A Legacy of Teaching in the West



▲ For the past 40+ years, Sister Maureen has delighted in teaching, which she always considered “an opportunity and privilege to journey with young people.”

To a child that’s struggling, a dedicated teacher can mean the difference between success and failure. Throughout her 40-year teaching career, the past 25 of which have been spent at Holy Redeemer Catholic School in Portland, Oregon, Sister Maureen Fox, OSF, has been just such a teacher. “I have always approached teaching as an opportunity and a privilege to journey with young people,” said Sister Maureen. Up until her retirement in June 2023, Sister Maureen was the last Sister of St. Francis of Philadelphia teaching on the West Coast, as well as the last woman religious in her school. “Because of this, I brought a different sort of presence than other folks,” she said. “I’ve always enjoyed witnessing to my faith and speaking to young people about it, inviting them to meet their God. That’s been really rewarding.”

“Sister Maureen’s dedication to her faith and to education is outstanding,” said Anna Raineri, former principal of Holy

Redeemer. “She has lived her vows as a religious and has served as an educator every step of the way in her long and successful career.”

Teacher and Friend

Sister Maureen has worked primarily with middle schoolers. While many adults shy away from this age group, Sister Maureen sees it as a great honor to move “with them through some muddy years, years that even for the best of them can be confusing.” Her focus is continually on the worth of her students, which is perhaps why so many have formed strong bonds with her.

Some have even gone on to develop lifelong friendships with Sister Maureen. Alan Ferschweiler, now captain of Portland Fire and Rescue, recalls meeting her at a funeral the summer before he was to enter sixth grade. He was to have her as his homeroom teacher and, eventually, for several advanced math classes. Alan still marvels at how



Sister Maureen directed her attention mostly to middle school students because of how tumultuous those years can be for many. She was ahead of her time, fostering a safe environment with her students by treating the children with respect and connecting with them often in simple ways. She never tried to be an intimidating force in the classroom.



impactful that initial meeting was for him. They spoke for quite a while, and the conversation put him at ease. Flash forward 35 years, Sister Maureen has been present for all the major milestones in his life, including his confirmation, his 21st birthday, and his wedding. “Sister Maureen was ahead of her time,” Alan said. While some of his other teachers were very intimidating, she was always laughing and encouraging students to do well in a safe atmosphere.

He recently came across a report card he received from Sister Maureen 35 years ago. On it, she delicately mentioned how he needed to stop disrupting class. “She

said it so nicely, when I’m sure it should have just been: ‘your son needs to stop being a knucklehead,’” Alan laughed. “But that’s Sister Maureen. She treated everyone with respect.”

This is a sentiment echoed by other former students, including a man who, when he recently visited the school, shared a memory of a time when he made a mistake in class and other children giggled. He remembered Sister Maureen promptly telling the group that there was no laughing at anyone in her class. She said, “You’re free to make a mistake!” He thanked her for that. “Her students respect her, and so they

end up doing the right thing,” said Nanette Roberts, the mother of one of Sister Maureen’s former students.

Beyond the Classroom

Even more important than Sister Maureen’s approach to teaching is her approach to helping kids with struggles beyond the classroom. Cady Rey, a fellow teacher, recalls an instance where a student was essentially raising himself. “He was largely responsible for his meals, getting himself to and from school, and by

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Sister Maureen, inspired by other sisters who were excellent in math and who became her role models, flourished as a math teacher. She even received a Math Endorsement from Portland State University at a time when the field was predominantly male.



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circumstance had to be very independent,” she said. “Every Thursday for an entire school year, Sister Maureen stayed late to ensure he had a quiet space to do his schoolwork and get support. She helped him edit his papers; she supported him in corrections of his math work; and most importantly, she let him know he was seen and valued as a young person.”

Another colleague, Mary Wendling, shares a similar story. “When she sees a need, Sister Maureen quietly addresses it and resolves it,” said Mary. “One example was the Student Council. She gave up her lunch time to mentor the students and guide them to make improvements in the school community.”

Sister Maureen’s mission to aid students continued even after they completed her courses. Alan recalls a time in college when he tried a substance that landed him in

off at that point,” he said. “But instead, she reached out and made sure I knew I was valued. That’s always been important to me.” He looks back on his initial meeting with Sister Maureen and feels it was part of God’s plan to give him this lifelong friend.

More than a Subject

While Sister Maureen has taught every subject but music, mathematics is a subject in which she truly shines. She was the math specialist at Holy Redeemer for the last 15 years. Growing up, Sister Maureen was taught by Sisters of St. Francis—Sisters Lois Weber, Frances Calhoun, and Virginia Spiegel—who were marvelous math teachers, so seeing women in math was second nature to her. “They were great role models!” she said. It wasn’t until she first started attending conferences for math teachers that she realized the participants were predominantly male. Now, 35 years later, the playing field has evened out a bit. “I’ve always tried to encourage young women to embrace math and enjoy it. Particularly those with a propensity for math that didn’t recognize it in themselves,” she said.

As important as math has been in Sister Maureen’s teaching career, even prompting her to pursue and obtain a Math Endorsement from Portland State University, the subject itself is not what she considers the most important thing. “People think you teach a subject and that’s it, but teaching’s much more involved than that...it’s being involved in kids’ personal lives and seeing their body language and telling if someone is down that day or struggling with something.”

This aspect of her ministry became much more challenging during the COVID-19 pandemic. The methodology required for virtual learning made it almost impossible to judge a student’s state of mind. Even after students returned to school, the effects of having interacted almost solely with screens for a year made reacclimating difficult. “One of the most challenging times for me as a teacher was the pandemic. No one could have scripted this experience,” Sister Maureen said. “We’re not really on the other side of it yet, with catching young people up. But again—we journey with them.”



When it came to supporting her students, no time was off-limits for Sister Maureen. She would often give up her lunch hour or stay late to connect with and mentor the children in her classes. For some, this made all the difference in their lives.

the hospital. Though he hadn’t been her student for many years at that point, when Sister Maureen heard what happened, she sent him a letter. “People do screw up in life, and I ended up making a bad decision,” he said. The card he received was pointed, saying that she understood he had made a poor choice and asked him to reflect on it. It also said she knew he was better than this. The fact she called him out while also sending words of encouragement was significant. “She could have written me



Sister Maureen had an affinity for all students, including the smallest! “The most important thing about Sister Maureen’s work as a teacher is that she truly believes in helping young people be the best and brightest versions of themselves,” said fellow teacher Cady Rey.

Experiencing Nature

Given the effects of too much screen time, spending time with students in nature is even more important. For 27 years, Sister Maureen was able to explore the great outdoors along with young people as part of the Outdoor School program. “I met my God as a young person through nature,” said Sister Maureen. “It’s fun to share these experiences with young people who may not have had that opportunity before.”

The group visited the high desert of central Oregon, where students viewed fossils amid the beautiful landscape. What’s more, the program does not allow students to have access to phones or electronics during their week-long experience. The result was genuine engagement with their peers as they explore science.

A Legacy of Love

To celebrate Sister Maureen’s retirement at the end of the 2022-2023 school year, her students presented a tribute in her honor at an assembly. The school also held a party. “It’s a challenge to convey just how impactful she has been to the community,” said Anna Raineri. “She was generous with

her time, patient as they come, and let the students know their value, regardless of their ability. She challenged capable students and encouraged those who struggled with math or in the life of an adolescent. Students trusted her and sought her advice on many levels.”

After four decades spent working with young people, Sister Maureen feels overwhelmed with gratitude. “I feel blessed and fortunate to have been a part of the



Folks from far and wide came out to celebrate Sister Maureen at her retirement party, including many Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia from the Portland area: Sisters Connie Furseth, Mary Elizabeth Coakley, Theresa Lamkin, Celeste Clavel, Guadalupe Medina, and Loretta Schaff.

HOW YOU CAN HELP...

- **Support the young people in your life** in whatever way you can, even if it might mean sacrificing a lunch hour here or there. Young people—particularly middle schoolers—are at a stage where they most need guidance and encouragement.
- **No matter what someone’s age, focus on their worth as an individual.** This not only helps them to feel seen, but also helps to foster deeper, truer connections, which may last a lifetime.
- Sister Maureen helped to uplift girls in math during a time when the field was predominantly male. Who might you know that is disenfranchised in some way, and **how can you help lift them up or discover a talent or skill that might otherwise have been overlooked?**
- Use the envelope attached to **donate to the Sisters of St. Francis’ education ministry.** Your donation can help students access a quality Catholic education.

education ministry for so many years, touching many lives as a teacher,” said Sister Maureen. “I could not have been called to a better ministry.” ■

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

Franciscan Spiritual Center–West

✧ THE FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL CENTER OFFERS MANY OTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRAYER, FAITH FORMATION, RETREAT EXPERIENCES, AND COMMUNITY.

The work of the Franciscan Spiritual Center–West was featured in both the winter 2006 and spring 2015 issues of *Good News*. Many of the programs highlighted in those articles are still going strong today, but there have also been some major changes over the years.



◀ A quilt fashioned into a labyrinth dons the wall of the new FSC – West and serves as a symbol of peace and meditation.

One significant change happened in March 2022 when the Franciscan Spiritual Center (FSC–West) moved from Milwaukie, Oregon, to its new home on the former Marylhurst University campus—a place of simple beauty and hospitality. Then in November 2022, Christine Naylor joined the center as the new executive director. Christine practiced law for almost 20 years and worked in a faith-based humanitarian role in the non-profit sector. She is a trained spiritual director and a contemplative soul who began her Franciscan education with Father Richard Rohr as a student at the Living School of Action and Contemplation in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

▼ Sister Mary Jo Chaves and Christine Naylor enjoy brainstorming new ways to offer spiritual opportunities for growth.



▲ A labyrinth is an ancient circular diagram found in many cultures around the world. It represents a spiritual journey in a physical form. Walking the labyrinth is a spiritual act and a physical meditation.

With Christine at the helm, spiritual direction continues to be an essential ministry of the Franciscan Spiritual Center. One-on-one spiritual direction is offered both in person and via Zoom. The center also provides group spiritual direction, where up to five individuals meet with a spiritual director via Zoom. In addition to being a more cost-effective option, the group dynamic provides an opportunity to listen deeply to God's movement in others' lives.

The ministry, sponsored by the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, has been formed and sustained over the years by many Sisters of St. Francis. Today, three sisters work at the center—Sisters Mary Jo Chaves, Celeste Clavel, and Theresa Lamkin. In addition to the sisters, 32 companions in

► *On the first Friday of every month, Sister Celeste Clavel and companions, My Phuong and Hoa Nguyen lead a Taize service in the center's beautiful outdoor setting. Neighbors are welcome.*

faith meet at the center each month, and many of them are volunteers.

The Franciscan Spiritual Center continues to offer a two-year program for training spiritual directors in a Franciscan model. Sister Mary Jo and Reverend Eileen Parfrey are the co-facilitators of this training program. Currently, 26 students from four countries and 11 U.S. states are participating in the program. Those from the Pacific Northwest come in person, but more than half of the cohort attends virtually. One exciting opportunity the center is actively exploring is responding to the desire of a group of sisters and laypersons in Africa who want to be trained as spiritual directors in the Franciscan tradition. To provide this training, the center must address the financial challenge of covering the tuition costs and is currently asking donors for financial support.

The Franciscan Spiritual Center offers many other opportunities for prayer, faith formation, retreat experiences, and community. In early 2023, 19 hosted programs were offered. Sister Mary Jo and a team of three companions continue to run a three-day Hermitage retreat twice a year. In addition, the center offers two different meditation groups, one that meets twice a week to practice meditation and discuss reflections and another that practices Centering Prayer.

Christine and the staff at FSC-West are experimenting with new offerings aimed at fostering the local Franciscan community and providing hospitality for both long-time patrons of the center and new Marylhurst neighbors. On the First Friday of the month, Sister Celeste Clavel and



companions My Phuong and Hoa Nguyen lead a Taize service. Christine and a group of volunteers have been making simple salads and soups and hosting dinner parties before the service begins. On the second Wednesday of the month, Terry Cappiello, FSC-West advisory board member and companion, hosts a discussion with a local author who has written about some aspects of spiritual growth.

Christine shared, "The ongoing ministry of the Franciscan Spiritual Center offers a sacred opportunity to preserve and protect space in this world for spiritual direction and the things that encourage people to go deeper in their faith. It also provides an opportunity to create community in a deeply Franciscan way." As is often the way, the Center is at a crossroads of change and transition. I believe the ministry will survive if we stay attentive and open to the Holy Spirit." ■

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

HOW YOU CAN HELP...

- **Consider making a donation** to the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia and let us know you would like it to benefit the Franciscan Spiritual Center in Oregon.
- Use the back page of this *Good News* to **request information about programming** from one of our spiritual centers.
- **Set aside some designated time to focus on your own spiritual life.** Clear your mind of distractions and be mindful of the simple beauty around you.

SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

Everyone has within a piece of good news.

See more good news at www.osfphila.org

SISTERS of ST. FRANCIS FOUNDATION 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

Dear Friends,

Peace and all good!

We do not exist for ourselves alone, and it is only when we are fully convinced of this fact that we begin to love ourselves properly and thus also love others. – Thomas Merton

Your goodness to the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia has been a blessing to many and brings to life the words of Thomas Merton in the way you have cared for others through your support of the sisters. Your generosity has touched the lives of our retired sisters, the people of Chester, those who are homeless in our area, and in countless others. We are grateful for your support of us which, in turn, allows ALL of us to help those most in need—those who are materially poor and marginalized, especially women and children. In your kindness you have brought to life the Gospel message and allowed those most in need to know of God's love for them!

We hope our 2022 Annual Report will bring you joy in seeing the impact of your goodness on the works of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia.

With Gratitude and prayers,

Sr. Deborah Krist, osf.

Director of Mission Advancement

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

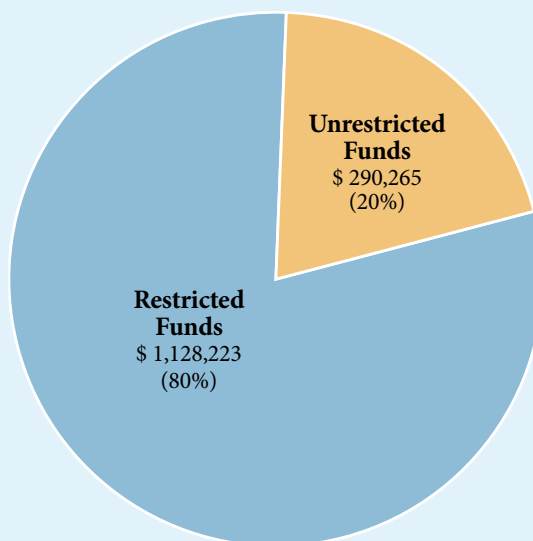
Thank You!

FISCAL YEAR 2022

Total Donations: \$ 1,418,488

Unrestricted Funds: \$ 290,265 (20%)

Restricted Funds: \$ 1,128,223 (80%)



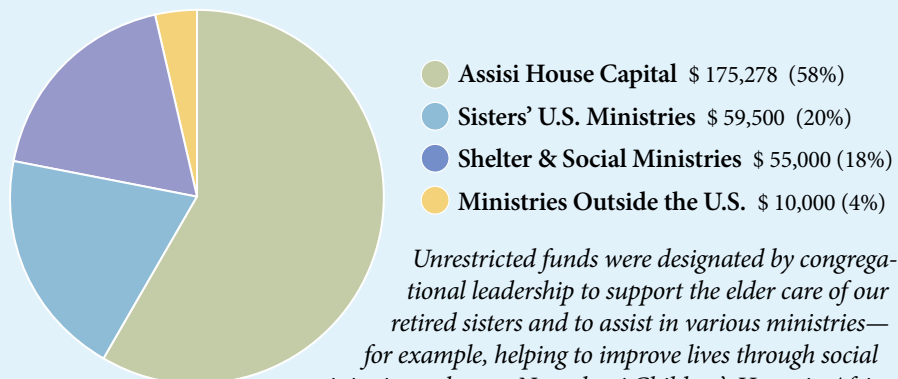
Sources of Donations: Website/Social Media Donations, Direct Mail Appeals, *Good News*, E-news, Memorial Gifts, Memorial Cards, Grants, Recurring Gifts, Estates, Inheritances, Franciscan Night, and Annual Golf Tournament.



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

Distribution of Unrestricted Funds: \$ 299,778*

* Distribution includes funds received in FY 2021



Unrestricted funds were designated by congregational leadership to support the elder care of our retired sisters and to assist in various ministries—for example, helping to improve lives through social ministries such as at Nyumbani Children's Home in Africa;

peace and justice initiatives surrounding gun violence and care for creation; ministries in Chester, Pennsylvania, such as Anna's Place; serving those who are poor at St. Francis Inn; and supporting the opening of St. Joseph Children's Health's new school, Mary Francis Bachmann School.



In Memoriam

Sister Esther Stewart
(formerly Sister David Marie)
September 9, 2023

Sister Kay Marie Duncan
(formerly Sister Ruth Mary)
July 7, 2023

Sister Mary Patricia Johnson
(formerly Sister Mary Amata)
May 8, 2023

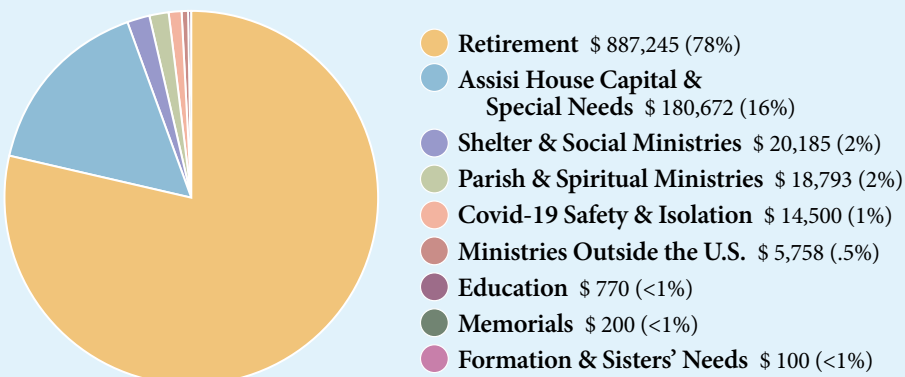
Sister Ann Cahill
(formerly Sister Marie Immaculee)
April 30, 2023

Sister Christopher Marie Wagner
April 20, 2023

Sister Assunta Prunty
April 16, 2023

Sister Justina Marie Miller
April 6, 2023

Distribution of Restricted Funds: \$ 1,128,223



Distribution of Restricted Categories

Ministries outside the U.S.: Africa, Haiti; **Assisi House Capital and Specific Needs:** kitchen renovations, safety doors, small animal therapy, and music therapy; **Education:** The Catholic High School of Baltimore; **Parish & Spiritual Ministries:** Franciscan Spiritual Centers, OLA Chapel collections; **Shelter & Social Ministries:** Anna's Place, Access Center in Chester, Transitions, Red Hill Farm, St. Francis Inn, discretionary fund for the poor; **Memorial Garden:** trees and benches.

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

FoCUS

► Josh Zinner remembers the first advice he received from Sister Nora who said, “the Franciscan gift of relationship is a call to ‘stay at the table’ with an active and listening ear.”



JOSH ZINNER

“JOSH’S LIFE AND WORK—HIS COMMITMENT TO SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE—CLOSELY ALIGNS WITH THE MISSION AND VALUES OF THE SISTERS. I AM HONORED TO CONTINUE THIS WORK WITH HIM.”

— TOM MCCANEY

Josh Zinner met the Sisters of St. Francis in 2016 when he became the CEO of The Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR). ICCR is a coalition of more than 300 institutional investors collectively representing over \$4 trillion in invested capital. One of his first calls was to Sister Nora Nash, the congregation’s former director of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). “I was moved by her tenacity and her passion for protecting those most negatively impacted by corporate practices,” Josh said. Josh has since been active in many corporate engagements with both Sister Nora and Tom McCaney, the current director of CSR—pressing companies to do better for the climate, on human rights, on the dangers of tobacco and gun violence, and on the community impacts of fracking.

ICCR’s members engage with their portfolio companies to help them mitigate environmental, social, and governance impacts that affect both people and the planet. As CEO, Josh manages a staff of 25 and oversees the organization’s programs and operations. ICCR provides program support for corporate engagements, which allows the Sisters of St. Francis to advance their commitment to integrating their Franciscan identity and vision. “As long-time members of our organization, the sisters have had a tremendous influence on our community,” Josh said. ICCR continues to be on the leading edge of the movement to improve corporate practices.

Josh is a long-time public interest lawyer who has spent his career working to promote social and economic justice and corporate accountability. Prior to joining ICCR, he co-directed the New Economy Project, an organization that works with community groups on economic justice issues; worked with Oxfam America on private sector campaigns including access to medicines; as a housing lawyer to low-income seniors; and as a social worker working with adjudicated youth. When he’s not working, Josh enjoys spending time with his family camping and hiking, playing basketball, riding his bike, watching live music, and reading.

Josh boasts that this is the best job he’s ever had, “due to the great members and staff, and the rich variety of issues that we are engaging on. It is incredibly rewarding to know that after 50 years, ICCR’s advocacy continues to positively influence how companies behave in the world.”



▲ Josh lives in Brooklyn with his wife Sarah Leah Whitson and their three children: Lena, Toby, and Julian. The family spends a lot of time together and everyone loves to cook.

► Josh, Sister Nora, Tom, and other ICCR members continue to challenge corporations—at present our priority issues are climate change, equitable supply chains, advancing worker justice, and health equity.



Celebrating Religious Life with Nine Jubilarians Representing over 600 Years of Service!

The Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia 2023 Jubilee Celebration was held the weekend of June 3-4, 2023. Jubilarians celebrating 50 and 70 years of religious profession gathered at Our Lady of Angels Convent in Aston, Pennsylvania, for a weekend of recalling memories and celebrating both the years past and the years to come. On Saturday afternoon, congregational leadership hosted a special Mass of Remembrance for members of the jubilee set who have died and an honorary dinner for all the jubilarians at Assisi House, our retirement residence in Aston. On Sunday morning, jubilarians and guests gathered in Our Lady of Angels Chapel for a joyous jubilee liturgy. Father Cyprian Rosen, OFM Cap., presided over the liturgy during which the jubilarians renewed their vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience—vows which they first professed 70 or 50 years ago. Following the liturgy, both jubilarians and their guests gathered for a luncheon at Our Lady of Angels Convent. In her Jubilee reflection, Sister Theresa Firenze, congregational minister, thanked the jubilarians and said, “Today, as we celebrate the Feast of the Trinity, we reflect upon the unique relationship God established with the people of Israel and upon God’s desire to cultivate a relationship with each one of us. We celebrate the faithfulness of our God made visible in the lives of our jubilarians.” Collectively the nine jubilarians represent 610 years of service in 15 dioceses throughout the United States.



Our 2023 Jubilarians.

Franciscan Federation in St. Louis

This year’s focus for the Franciscan Federation, held in St. Louis, Missouri, was on the inclusivity we seek to realize with the theme, *Awaken Joy: There’s Room for You in the Crib*. Leaning on the importance of the Franciscan Tradition’s foundation in incarnational spirituality, we collectively explored the concept of inclusivity, specifically, how the Federation and its members can become a more inclusive and welcoming space for all who identify as Franciscan, with a particular focus on racial diversity. Throughout the conference, the theme inspired by Greccio was reflected in the table décor, the creches on display from around the world, and the beautiful prayers which perfectly captured the theme and brought the sessions to life with the Franciscan Spirit of all who had gathered.



(L-R) Sisters Kathleen McCabe, Mary Beth Antonelli, and Diane Tomkinson carried the banner and let the Peace Walk through the streets of Chester, Pennsylvania.

National Gun Violence Awareness

From coast to coast, thousands of Americans showed up in orange on June 2-4, 2023, to honor survivors and build community with others working to end gun violence. Our community of sisters, companions, and coworkers joined in two events to mark the occasion.

Lifting Our Light in the Darkness Event: Several sisters and companions joined the “Lifting Our Light in the Darkness Event” National Prayer Vigil, sponsored by Nuns Against Gun Violence on Friday night, June 2. Many participated in Novena prayers in preparation for the weekend and lit candles as they prayed the prayer service provided. Candles were then placed in windows across the USA for the remainder of the weekend.

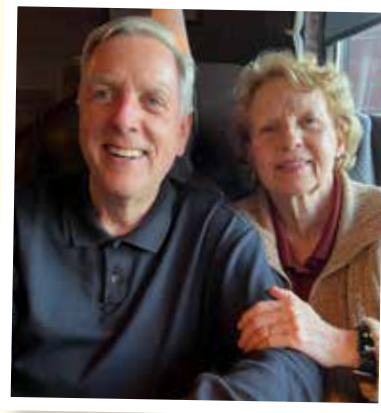
Delco Wear Orange Peace Walk 2023: Others joined in a gathering in Chester, Pennsylvania, on Saturday, June 3, for the Delco Wear Orange Peace Walk. Carrying signs touting, “No More Silence — End Gun Violence,” participants represented many concerned citizens and the faces of men and women who have lost children, grandchildren, and other family members and friends to gun violence. More than 150 attendees walked for peace at the event to raise awareness about the impact of gun violence on communities and families.



Ten Sisters of St. Francis and two of our companions attended the Franciscan Federation in St. Louis.

Donor Spotlight

► David and Margi Willis have two married adult sons Adam (Andrea) and Andrew (Kate) and four grandchildren: Julia, Clara, Sam, and Lucy. The couple currently attend St. Matthews Cathedral parish in Washington D.C.



DAVID & MARGI WILLIS

"I THANK GOD FOR THE GIFT THE WILLIS FAMILY HAS BEEN IN MY LIFE! THEY HAVE BROUGHT ME GREAT JOY OVER THE YEARS. I TREASURE THEIR FRIENDSHIP AND I ASK GOD TO CONTINUE TO BLESS THEM."

— SISTER GERALDA MESKILL, OSF

Have you ever met someone and knew you would be instant friends? That is exactly what happened when David and Margi Willis met Sister Gerald Meskill, OSF. The couple began attending Mass at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Portland, Oregon, where Sister Gerald served for 24 years in diocesan ministry and house manager to the archbishops. "We were in awe of Sister Gerald's deep commitment to her faith, her congregation, and the Church, yet especially her openness, welcoming spirit, and humor," said David, "In talking with her and hearing her story, we became very close over the years."

When Sister Gerald moved east to Aston, Pennsylvania, in 2012, the couple also coincidentally moved east. David, a Developmental Pediatrician began working on Child Health Policy and moved to Washington, DC. "My mother lived in Delaware and when visiting her, we also visited Sister Gerald at the Motherhouse in Aston," David said, "My mother and Sister Gerald were so funny together, holding hands, walking through the halls of the convent, just like forever sisters!" Margi, a devout Catholic who taught and served in administration for Catholic schools, loved the beauty and Franciscan presence at Our Lady of Angels Convent. "The sisters welcome was wonderful. The graciousness, attitude, and Franciscan joy were just fabulous to witness," she said.

David and Margi recall a trip to Spokane, Washington, when they visited the old St. Joseph Orphanage, "This is where I really came to understand and appreciate the congregation's commitment to children and families. It was back 25 years now and I can still feel the sacredness and charism of that space."

The couple has been making monthly donations to the Sisters of St. Francis Foundation in Sister Gerald's name for years. When asked why they felt impelled to be so generous, David said, "All people who have relationships with Catholic sisters' should donate in their honor. These women sacrificed so much of their lives for their faith and for the people of God. They deserve to be honored. Donations in

a sister's honor are a way to make her life and service visible to others. We hope this article compels others to do the same."

► Margi Willis appreciates the Catholic education she received as a child. Being taught by sisters, like Sister Gerald, instilled great values that she has carried with her for life.



▲ David's mother Bea Willis and Sister Gerald were like two peas in a pod while touring OLA Convent in Aston.



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Help Us Provide Care!

Since 1855, the Sisters of St. Francis have responded to needs wherever and whenever they were made known. We have ministered on the east and west coasts, in Puerto Rico, Hawaii, and Alaska. Beyond the United States, our sisters have responded to our brothers and sisters in Africa, Haiti, Ireland, and the Caribbean.

As a congregation, we have gone from more than 1200 women religious to 300, with a median age of 84. As a result, we no longer have a large enough base of support from younger sisters in active ministry which is why your assistance is more crucial than ever.

In this season of giving, we ask for your help for our ministries. Whether your donations reach St. Mary's in Alaska, the east or west coasts of the U.S., Africa, or Ireland, they will support our sisters in their varied ministries and respond to the needs of God's people!

I would like to support:

- ☐ Greatest need ☐ Education efforts ☐ Other ministries

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Visit our website at www.osfphila.org



Mother Francis Bachmann

160th Anniversary of the Death of Mother Francis Bachmann

On July 2, 2023, we honored Mother Francis Bachmann, wife, mother, foundress, and risk-taker, who speaks to the heart of not only the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, our companions, and coworkers, but also to women around the globe who experience the joys and heartaches of life. "As we celebrate the 160th Anniversary of Mother Francis Bachmann's death, we call on her spirit to generate a passion for imitating Jesus in our world today! Imitating Jesus invites us to live into the Paschal Mystery." As Mother Francis experienced many deaths, moments of letting go, letting things ascend, and claiming new births, she lived into a new spirit for the life that we are living today.

Documentary on the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia

Sara McDermott Jain, a long-time adjunct professor at Neumann University and writer for *Good News* since 2019, is directing a feature-length documentary film project on the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia. Filmed interviews will be gathered from willing sisters, as well as from lay people currently working in their ministries, and students currently receiving an education from their institutions. The finished film is going to be 90 minutes long and will spread the word about the history and legacy of the sisters and educate the public on how they have truly shaped both the world and their surrounding communities. It will also look toward the future and meditate on how the legacy of the sisters will be carried on in the years to come. The documentary is set to be released in 2025.



Sara McDermott Jain, a writer and adjunct professor, is directing a feature-length documentary film detailing the story of the Sisters.



**GIVING
TUESDAY**

Nov. 28, 2023

Tuesday, November 28, 2023, is a National Day of Giving. Mark your calendar and consider supporting the current and future needs at Assisi House. [#GivingTuesday](#)

◀ At the request of Archbishop Gross, the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia entered the great western mission of education in 1885, establishing a school among the Blue Mountains of Eastern Oregon—St. Francis Academy in Baker City, a little mining town. Five young sisters were selected to become the first sisters to join the "Western mission band," Sister Stanislaus, Sister Angelica, Sister Marcella, Sister de Pazzi, and Sister Ferdinand. Now some 138 years later, Sister Maureen Fox, the last Sister of St. Francis in education ministry on the West Coast, says her farewell to the students and staff of Holy Redeemer Catholic School in Portland, Oregon. Read her story on page 12.