

Communigram

Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity

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4 Postulants Receive Franciscan Insignia

On Sunday, December 11, 2016, four Postulants—Shari Heisdorffer, Tricia Oswald, Colleen Demro, and Megan Kugel— received the Insignia of St. Francis. Community Director Sister Natalie Binversie presented the insignia, a Tau cross with the hand of Jesus covering that of St. Francis, to remind the postulants of their own call to follow Christ with us. Worn on a chain, it becomes the formal witness to all of being a Postulant in our Community.

Why the Tau cross? In Thomas Celano's first book on St. Francis it reads that "Francis made for himself a tunic showing the image of the Tau cross so as to remind himself of his call to imitate Christ."

Toboggan Fun

Those in formation enjoyed the beautiful snow before the Insignia Ceremony.

Photo by Benjamin Wideman



Motherhouse—St. Mary chapel decorated for Christmas.



Postulants Review Sheboygan's Reboot Live

Postulant Megan Kugel reviews Sheboygan, Wisconsin Catholic Parishes recent Reboot Live Event.

Reboot Live was an amazing and Spirit-filled way to end the semester. The evening began with a visit to Sister Mary Teresa Bettag's home. Her parents and siblings were extremely warm and generous in their hospitality. It was a blessing to be able to eat dinner together. Afterwards, we headed to Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Sheboygan where we met up with Sister Regina Rose Pearson. This truly was a wonderful surprise. We heard music from Jon Niven and had an opening prayer with Archbishop ListECKI before Chris Stefanick made his appearance. Chris Stefanick's presentation was divided into two parts. The first session was an engaging explanation of the love story between God and man. The second centered on living out this love story in our daily lives through the Five Habits of Holy People.

We all enjoyed and learned from these Five Habits which included Love Yourself, Pray, Share the Faith, Friendship, and Reboot. One of Colleen Demrow's favorite parts was hearing about Chris Stefanick's family through his pictures and examples. Shari Heisdorffer was particularly drawn by the comedy involved throughout the presentation. She also liked how he shared the inspiring story of Blessed Chiara Luce Badano. She is the first person of generation X to be beatified which definitely provides hope for young people walking in holiness. Tricia Oswald believed the entire presentation was



excellent and said it was difficult to pick a favorite part since the entire evening was so good. I definitely echo her sentiments, but admit I found joy in writing down some of his witty faith-filled quotes. Examples include "Your head is like a bad neighborhood – don't go in it alone" and "2/3 of God's name is Go!"

We are all extremely grateful for this evening, and will definitely take this inspiration with us as we journey forward in formation.



Kekaha Hawaii—Sisters Michael Ann O'Donnell, Janet Rose, and Mary Ann Tupy send Christmas Blessings from St. Theresa Parish.



Sisters Lead Music at Holy Angels School Mass

Here's a sweet 2016 Advent memory! Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity were invited by a very dedicated, persistent teacher-friend, Sheila Tranel, to lead the music at the December 1st Mass with the children at Holy Angels School, West Bend, Wisconsin.

Sister Myra Jean Sweigart, experienced in being a principal, felt at home in front of the congregation teaching the children a song that was new to them. It seems Advent is never long enough to sing some of our favorites. It was great to hear a full choir.

During Mass Pastor Father Pat Heppe encouraged all of us in the congregation to 'build' our houses (souls) through virtues like love and kindness. It certainly mirrored St. Francis of Assisi's call from God to "rebuild My Church."

Another sweet memory was enjoying donuts with Advent-colored sprinkles in the second grade classroom before heading home to Manitowoc.

By Sister Julie Ann Sheahan

Motherhouse Christmas Day Variety Show



Sister Michaela Melko Named Professor Emeritus

Manitowoc, Wisconsin — Sister Michaela Melko, OSF, was named professor emeritus during Silver Lake College of the Holy Family's Winter Commencement Ceremony on December 17. The honor is given to retired faculty members who have made substantial contributions to Silver Lake College and to their professions. The status allows Sister Melko to retain all the rights of a faculty member.

Sister Melko retired from full-time teaching in August 2015, after 35 years of dedicated service to Silver Lake College. She continues to volunteer in the School of Education, promoting the mission of Silver Lake College through her participation.

From 2011 until her retirement, Sister Michaela was director of graduate education and director of the master's program for administrator leadership. From 1992 to 2014, she served as director of graduate studies. From 1974 to 1981, and again from 1987 to 1994, she taught in the science and education departments.

"It is evident Sister Michaela is a faculty role model for teaching excellence and scholarship," said Nancy Sim, chair of the department of graduate education, who also praised Sister Michaela's many contributions to the college in the area of active service.

Sister Michaela's professional involvement at Silver Lake College has included leadership as faculty chair and faculty development committee

chair, and memberships in the president's council and dean's council. She was a member of the committee that established the first graduate program in education, specifically teacher leadership, and was instrumental in establishing the first learning communities for administra-

tor leadership. She also helped charter Silver Lake College's Upsilon Mu Chapter of Kappa Delta Pi honor society in education.

While at Silver Lake College, she received: the Outstanding Achievement Award as professor of science; a certificate of recognition from the science committee of the Green Bay Diocese; the Sears-Roebuck Foundation Teaching Excellence and Campus Leadership Award; and the Sister Anne Kennedy Presidential Award, among other honors.

Sister Michaela entered Holy Family Convent in 1952, was received into the novitiate on June 13, 1956, and professed her first vows on Aug. 15, 1957. Sister Michaela made her final profession on Aug. 15, 1962.

After entering Holy Family Convent and completing two years at Holy



Eric B. Volcheff, chair of the Silver Lake College of the Holy Family Board of Trustees, left, and Dr. Chris E. Domes, president of Silver Lake College of the Holy Family, right, present Sister Michaela Melko with her professor emeritus medallion during the Winter Commencement Ceremony on December 17.
Photo by Benjamin Wideman

Family College with a major in math, Sister Michaela attained a Bachelor of Science degree from Marquette University in Milwaukee with a major in physics and minors in math and chemistry. In 1968, she earned a Master of Science degree from Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., with a major in physics and a minor in chemistry. In 1974, she received a Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in curriculum and instruction-science education.

Sister Michaela also served at Catholic Memorial High School in Waukesha for 16 years, first as a physics, chemistry and math teacher, and later as acting principal.

Press Release from Silver Lake College by Suzanne Weiss, director of public relations.

JUST Gospel!

By Sister Kathleen Murphy
Social Justice Commission

This month has, for many decades, signaled the need for prayer for Christian unity. Thus Pope Francis asks us to pray that all Christians may be faithful to the Lord's teaching by striving with prayer and fraternal charity to restore ecclesial communion and by collaborating to meet the challenges facing humanity.

How did this tradition of prayer for ecumenism begin? Two American Episcopalians, Father Paul James Wattson and Sister Lurana White, co-founders of the Franciscan Friars and Sisters of the Atonement, were totally committed to the reunion of the Anglican Communion with the Roman Catholic Church. As such, they started a prayer movement that explicitly prayed for the return of non-Catholic Christians to the Holy See. Needless to say, such an observance would attract few of our separated brothers and sisters. This idea of a period of prayer for Christian unity grew from the suggestion of one day of prayer into an octave of prayer between the Feast of St. Peter's Chair on January 18 and the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul

on January 25. (The Feast of the Chair of Peter has since been moved.) When Fr. Paul and Sr. Lurana became Roman Catholics, Pope Pius X gave his blessing to the Church Unity Octave and in 1916, Pope Benedict XV extended its observance to the universal church. So we see that the root of this week of prayer is truly Franciscan.

In our own day, Pope Francis has spoken about this practice of praying for unity. He explained that this Week of Prayer invites us to "reflect on, and bear witness to, our unity in Christ as God's People." He went on to say, that all those baptized, reborn to new life in Christ, are brothers and sisters, despite, "our divisions."

Continuing on the theme of baptism, he said that it meant rediscovering the source of mercy, which is a source of hope for all, and he underlined, "no one is excluded from God's mercy."

Is there someone of another faith whom you could join in prayer and/or worship this month? Can you invite someone to join you at Mass?



Father Paul James Wattson and Sister Lurana White, co-founders of the Franciscan Friars and Sisters of the Atonement, began the tradition of prayer for ecumenism.

How about doing some reading about world religions? We cannot hope for the peace that unity brings if we are without understanding. Do some reading about St. Francis' time with the Sultan and the practices he brought back to his community.

Concluding his thoughts, the Holy Father prayed that during this Week of Prayer, the Lord would help all Christians to grow in that unity "which is greater than what divides us," adding, "together, may we respond to his call to share with others, especially with the poor and forgotten of our world, the gift of divine mercy which we ourselves have received."

Celebrating Birthdays in Bapchule, Arizona



Happy Birthday to Sister Martha Mary Carpenter (December 9) and to Sister Natalie Binversie (December 17)!! Sister Natalie is visiting from Wisconsin for the week!! Happy early BIRTHDAY to you BOTH!! Thank you for coming to visit, Sister Natalie!!

Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity – St. Peters Indian Mission at
<https://www.facebook.com/BecomingFranciscanJoy/?fref=ts>

Sister Marella Wagner Honored for 50 years of Service and Volunteer Work



Dr. Chris E. Domes, president of Silver Lake College, presents Sister Marella Wagner with her award for 50 years of service and volunteerism. Photo by Suzanne Weiss

Manitowoc, Wisconsin — Sister Marella Wagner, professor emeritus at Silver Lake College, was recently honored for 50 years of service and volunteer work. She holds the record for the most years of continuous service as a faculty member in the department of music at the college.

Sister Marella has been praised for her creativity, dedication and inspirational personality.

During her tenure she served in many capacities, notably as a distinguished professor of music theory. She excelled at designing and implementing a comprehensive musicianship curriculum for all music majors, which encompassed principal aspects of music theory instruction.

In addition to her teaching responsibilities, Sister Marella chaired the music department for 10 years, initiated and directed the popular Artist Music Series, and managed Kodály-related publications, which provided substantial funding for graduate music scholarships. Sister Marella frequently volunteered for multiple events and projects, both in the music department and throughout the college, including serving as chapel organist.

She received her Bachelor of Music from Silver Lake College and her Master of Music degree in music theory and composition from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Sister Marella has been an active member of the international, national and Midwest Kodály associations. In addition, she has written about music for numerous publications, and has studied and given presentations about music in various places, both in the United States and other countries.

Other Sisters honored: Sister Marie Kolbe Zamora, assistant professor of theology and ministry, five years of service and Sister Lorna Zemke, professor emeritus, 45 years of service.

Press Release from Silver Lake College by Suzanne Weiss, director of public relations.

Students from St. Gregory School in St. Nazianz, Wisconsin visited the Motherhouse on December 22 and sang for the Sisters in the cafeteria.



Parish Welcomes Postulant Home for Christmas Break



Fr. Paul Hrezo, Pastor of Christ Our Light Parish, Cambridge, Ohio with Tricia Oswald and on the left, Fr. Bob Borer and Bill Ditto.

Cambridge, Ohio—The priests and parishioners of Christ Our Light Parish welcomed Postulant Tricia Oswald from Holy Family Convent, Manitowoc, Wisconsin back for her vacation. Tricia helped out as Eucharistic Minister and sang in the choir. She also helped in Pastoral Ministry.

It was a blessing to see and visit with Tricia! We continue to pray for vocations!

Submitted by Sister Sharon Paul



The Sisters at the Motherhouse prayed the Blessing of St. Francis over Sister Emiliana Kayaga as she prepared to leave us December 15 to spend Christmas with Sisters from her Community studying in New Jersey before she would return to Tanzania on December 29 to start her work in their Community hospital.



Photo: Omar from the Catholic Vision

Sisters Honored at Yuma Parish 150th Anniversary

Sister Charleen Acker shares on the recent 150th anniversary of Immaculate Conception Parish in Yuma, Arizona.

The culmination of the 150th anniversary of Immaculate Conception Parish in Yuma was celebrated with Mass on our feast day December 8th. Bishop Gerald Kicanas, the bishop of the Tucson diocese, concelebrated with about 20 priests from the area along with the four priests of the parish.

In the name of the parish our pastor, Father Manuel Fragoso, presented our Community of Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity with a chalice, paten and ciborium from Italy in gratitude for our service here in the parish and school for the last 86 years. Sister Natalie Binversie, our Community Director, accepted it along with 12 Sisters from the various Arizona missions who joined the Sisters in Yuma for the celebration.



*Sacred vessels given to the Community.
The inscription reads:
The Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity
Through Christ you came to be part our community.
In Him, we celebrate it.
Immaculate Conception Parish
Yuma, AZ
150th Jubilee Year
December 8, 2016.”*

After the Mass we processed to St. Anne’s Hall where a magnificent mural depicting the history of the parish, its priests, diocesan bishops as well as Yuma history was unveiled. It contains about 48 pieces and was designed by artist Audry Rocio from Guadalajara, Mexico.

Franciscan Tree Calls for Prayer for Our Nation

Manitowoc, Wisconsin - There is a unique ‘prayer tree’ in our Motherhouse. Sisters and our employees are offering prayers for our nation this Christmas Season.



We are remembering the many needs of the common good, but more so, the unique individuals who live in each state and his or her concerns.



Kekaha, Hawaii— Saint Theresa School hosted the annual School Spelling Bee December 12. Sister Mary Ann Tupy was delighted to have two of her students place first and second. Hannah Brun on the left took first place and Kanoe Dusenberry on the right took second place.

Sisters & Hispanic Community Honor Our Lady of Guadalupe

Greenwood, Mississippi—Balloons, streamers, costumes and flowers surely signal a celebration! All these elements lent themselves to the celebration of the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe here at St. Francis Parish in Greenwood. Families bedecked a trailer with balloons, drapery and ribbon in the colors of Mexico where Our Lady appeared to Juan Diego.



The procession ended in front of St. Francis Church where many more members of the Hispanic Community waited. Some of the families spent most of Saturday preparing the church for the liturgy. The beautiful statue of the Virgin of Guadalupe was banked in roses of every hue. Those coming to celebrate brought countless more bouquets and plants so that Mary was surrounded with the beauties of God's creation. Beauty abounded in so many forms—the



beat of feet following the image in procession, the lilt of voices raised in praise, the rhythms of the rosary prayed in faith, the reverent faces of children honoring their heavenly Mother, and the vibrant colors of blooms opening at the feet of the Virgin.

By Sister Annette Kurey



Bishop Larry Silva visited St. Theresa parish, Kekaha,

Hawaii on December 3 & 4. He said the 5:00 p.m. Mass Saturday December 3 and then joined the leaders of the parish for a pot luck supper and discussion in the parish hall. The next day Sunday, December 4, he said the 8:30 Mass and then enjoyed a pot luck dinner with all the members of the parish and enjoyed a lively discussion with the members of the parish.

Submitted by Sister Mary Ann Tupy