

Communigram

Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity

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Celebration of the Transitus

The Transitus is a special ritual celebrated each year on October 3rd to commemorate the death of Francis of Assisi and his entry into God's eternal glory.

During the celebration at the Motherhouse we praised and thanked God for the life of our brother Francis by hearing the remembrances of four people who knew

him well. These four are: Lady Pica of Assisi, the mother of Saint Francis; Saint Clare of Assisi, a follower and beloved friend of Francis; Lady Jacoba Frangipani of Rome, another friend and a benefactor of Francis; and Brother Leo of Assisi, one of the first companions of Saint Francis in creating a brotherhood that led to a new religious movement in the Church—the Franciscans.

A Visit From Irma

Longwood, Florida—For days we were that Irma, a category 5 storm in the Atlantic, was coming to Florida. “Prepare ye the Way.” That meant collecting supplies and putting up shutters. Irma arrived on September 10 around noon with strong feeder bands of wind, rain, and six tornado warnings. Our power went out about 9:30 p.m. A microburst hit the area and falling trees hit power lines and blew out transformers. Four huge trees fell on our neighbor’s house two doors away, crushing their roof in the front and the back of the house. The top of one tree blew a block away.

We spent the bulk of the storm in a walk in closet listening to the winds roar, the rain beat on the roof, and praying rosary after rosary. Daylight revealed a little lake up to our back fence while houses on the other side had four feet of water in them and have been considered uninhabitable.

So many people helped each other as we were without power for three days and telephone service for six days. To weeks later debris still lines the streets but, we count our blessings and thank all who prayed for us.

Submitted by Sister Jessica Zwarra

New Mission in St. Louis, Missouri

The Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity were invited to come to St. Louis by Archbishop Robert Carlson. Over a year ago the Archdiocese purchased a building located across the street from the last Planned Parenthood Clinic in the state.



Archbishop Robert J. Carlson blessed our convent and offered Mass in our chapel on September 29.

On August 28, 2017, Sister Sue Ann Hall and Sister Pat Sevcik drove to St. Louis, Missouri arriving at 2:00 p.m. Our mission is to be present to people who would like to come to pray here for an end to abortion and to offer them hospitality. The day we arrived, we were met by a group of volunteers who had been working hard to prepare this house for our arrival. We learned that many people, including some seminarians helped.

Archbishop Robert J. Carlson blessed our convent and offered Mass in our chapel on September 29. The Archbishop formally named the three story house; *Our Lady of Guadalupe Convent*. We are looking forward to receiving a statue and a picture of Our

Lady of Guadalupe from the Motherhouse in mid-October.

Our contact here is Sister Marysia Weber, a Religious Sister of Mercy. She is the Director of the Office of Consecrated Life for the Archdiocese and has worked tirelessly to gather volunteers, purchase needed furniture and supplies, and coordinate much activity. We are very grateful to her, her Community of Sisters, and to many people who have befriended and welcomed us.

We invite everyone to join us in prayer through the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe for respect for all life from conception to natural death.

By Sister Patricia Sevcik

A Labor Day I Won't Forget!



Casa Grande, Arizona—We invited our Sisters missioned in Arizona to our convent for a Labor Day cookout. I had the grill filled with brats and as I was grilling the temperature kept dropping. I heard a sizzling noise so I turned off everything and tried to tighten the connection to the butane tank but it was all tight. I turned it back on again and still the same sound and temperature. Thinking I was running out of fuel, I went to get the burgers to put on before the tank went empty. Coming back I saw flames on top of the tank. What am I going to do—no fire extinguisher—flames too high for me to put out. I can't get at the control to turn off the tank as that is where the flames are.

The 911 operator asked me how close to the house the grill was with the flames—about 3 feet. She told me to get everyone out of the house. I asked, "Is the tank going to explode?" "That is a strong possibility." I thought, I can't have this house on fire. I prayed.

Two police cars and four fire trucks came. I stood there with my apron on and the head fireman asked me, "What's wrong Sister?" I replied, "My brats are on fire." About 10 minutes later he came back and said, "Sister, I saved your brats." They closed the cover to the grill and sprayed down below. He told me we have a faulty hose to the tank. Whew!!! Thank you God for firemen!

We used the George Foreman grill for the hamburgers. The Sisters arrived from Yuma, Sierra Vista, Tucson, and Bapchule. A good time was had by all with plenty of food.

By Sister Carol Seidl

Novitiate Patio Gets a Face-lift: Sisters Invited to Open House

The Novices, with the help and advice of the maintenance men, redid the Novitiate patio. Power hosing the bricks to their present cleanliness was a slow and tedious job requiring many hours. Patio furniture received a new coat of paint and the walls required coat of rubberized paint. (Note the cracked white unfinished part of the wall in photo 3 top row.)

To celebrate it's completion, the Novices invited the professed Sisters from the local convents to enjoy an open house with s'mores, beverages, and Franciscan socializing.



The Heartaches of Deportation

We in Greenwood, Mississippi have experienced the ugliness of deportation. The Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency (I.C.E) had treated one of our parishioners unjustly and when we returned in August to St. Francis Convent, Greenwood the Duron family was already deported to Mexico.

Mr. & Mrs. Duron were both born in Mexico but gave birth to American children. The Duron children were going to St. Francis School for over eight years. St. Francis School was the only school these children ever knew. They were in pre-K, third grade, fifth grade, and sixth grade. All four received their sacrament(s) at St. Francis Catholic Church. Prior to deportation the Duron children were filled with anxiety and exhaustion as they struggled to stay focused in the last weeks of school. They knew they were being forced to leave their only home and were being terrorized by I.C.E.



The Duron's: A Beautiful Catholic Family

It was a sad day as we started the first day of school because the Duron's were not with us at St. Francis. In the late afternoon of the solar eclipse the Duron's called us from Mexico. It was a true delight to hear each of them explain that they were all safe and started their first day of school in Agua Cliente, Mexico. The girls had never before been educated in Mexico and it was their first

experience being educated outside of the United States. We pray for them and their family to continue to grow in their faith and education. Also we pray to see them again soon.

We, Sisters, witness a faithful family blossoming within our church and school and we unfortunately observed the horrors of a good family of ours being terrorized by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency. They became prisoners of fear yet they are a family of compassion, they were treated unmercifully but they are a family of mercy, and they were persecuted while they are a meek family.

This is your beautiful family; too, they are part of our Catholic family.

Submitted by Sister Elena Gonzales

Mission Trip Broadens Understanding



Left photo is of the entire group in front of the apartment building we stayed in and the second is taken at the “A Just Harvest Community Kitchen.”

This past August I went on a mission trip for three days with nineteen of my parishioners from St. Mary’s, Winneconne, Wisconsin to Chicago. We worked with a group called City Service Mission (CSM), a Christian organization that was created in 1988 to give people a life changing short term urban experience. Their philosophy is to help people “experience a city, learn a city and help a city” and that is exactly what we did nonstop from morning until night for three days.

After we arrived on Monday afternoon we chose a bed in our assigned two-flat apartment that had enough bunk beds to sleep about forty people—only two bathrooms! Then we broke up into two groups and ate dinner in a family-owned Vietnamese or Cuban restaurant. Dinner was followed by a three hour “prayer tour” of the city of Chicago which included downtown and many of the city’s 77 neighborhoods. It was called a “prayer tour” because we prayed for the people that lived in the places we drove through and learned about.

The next day we began our mission work and here are some of the things we did in only three days:

- ◆ helped to serve meals for those in need at two community kitchens.
- ◆ played bingo with senior citizens in an apartment complex.
- ◆ worked with the Green Star Movement to create mosaics for the city.
- ◆ pulled weeds at one of the local community organic gardens.
- ◆ worked with Hispanic children at a school in Albany park.
- ◆ experienced a cultural plunge into a Hindu and Muslim neighborhood.
- ◆ ate dinner at a family-owned Vietnamese, Salvadorian and Thai restaurant.

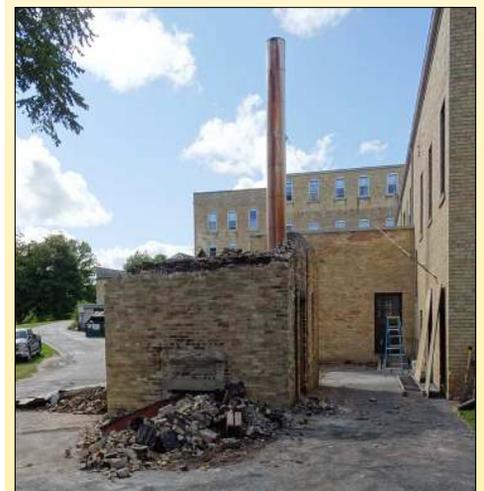
We learned and shared a bit of life with so many people. We were able to lend a helping hand and a listening ear to young and old. We met people who looked different from us but reminded us that we are all part of one human family where everyone matters and is loved by God. It was definitely an experience that not only broadened our understanding of the city of Chicago but also helped us to appreciate its cultural diversity and the hundreds of people who work every day to care for those less fortunate than we are. *By Sister Pamela Biehl*



Gathering of the Religious of the Green Bay Diocese

A gathering of Religious Women was held on September 16, 2017 at the Franciscan Center on the campus of Silver Lake College of the Holy Family. One Hundred and ten Sisters were present, representing twelve different Religious Congregations. Bishop David Ricken and Sister Marie Kolbe Zamora, OSF spoke on Evangelization and Discipleship.

Sister Louise Hembrecht, Representative for Religious in the Green Bay Diocese facilitated the gathering.



During the first part of September the old incinerator building at the Motherhouse was demolished. It’s smoke stack was taken down in the autumn of 2016.

JUST Gospel!

By Sister Kathleen Murphy
Social Justice Commission

“...Spirit of God, walk among your people. Make us your own, now is the time...” We return to Tom Kendzia’s song, *Now Is the Time* to begin our thoughts for this month.

We know that God truly walked among his people in the person of Jesus. He knew every aspect of our human existence. Part of Jesus’ human experience was his knowledge of the reality of work with its dignity and its sufferings. But that was then and this is now. Today we call on the Spirit of God to come and walk among us making the challenges and joys of work holy.

Though our work may sometimes weary us, we know that many in our world are not blessed with the opportunity to work in ways that befit their dignity and giftedness. Thus, Pope Francis takes as his prayer intention this month, *That all workers may receive respect and protection of their rights, and that the unemployed may receive the opportunity to contribute to the common good.*

When people are denied work or respect in the workplace they soon become hopeless. Cardinal Joseph Tobin of Newark, New Jersey reminds us, “As Christians we have no option but to be disciples of hope—a realistic hope, not pie in the sky in the great by and by. I suggest the way we do that is by putting a face on the faceless or restoring a human face to those whose faces have been distorted. In doing so, we show our face not as a bunch of

isolated individuals but as a network of hope: people who believe and, because of that belief, accept the bond of solidarity.”

You may be thinking, “I’m not an employer. I don’t have the power to offer or deny work to anyone. I cannot go out and create jobs or even find employment for others. How does this challenge speak to me?” Of course Pope Francis is asking us to join him in prayer for those who long for the dignity of worthwhile work. That is a wonderful starting point...Pray!

Beyond praying for this intention, we can consider our Core Value statement that says, *We work at building community by accepting the uniqueness of each other in both our strengths and weaknesses.* Can we be more mindful and sincere in our appreciation of the work done by our Sisters? This doesn’t mean just certain works by certain Sisters, but the works done by each and every Community member. Giving the gift of expressed appreciation to every Sister for what she contributes to our Community, the Church, and the world is a great place to start for this month’s challenge.

Beyond praying for respect and opportunity in the workplace, and appreciating all that is done by those in our daily experience, perhaps we need to watch our judgmental attitude toward those who are unemployed or underemployed. We do not always know the circumstances



Sister Mercita Vanden Avond helped decorate the tables for St. Francis Day.

of those who do not, or cannot work. We need to presume respect rather than assuming laziness. Father Thomas Rosica, CSB shares a story about Pope Francis that speaks to this point. “When Francis was a parish priest in Argentina, he met a mother with young children who had been abandoned by her husband. She had no steady income. When odd jobs were scarce, she would prostitute herself in order to feed her children and provide for her family. During that time she would visit the local parish, which tried to help her by offering food and material goods. One day during the Christmas season the mother requested to see Padre Jorge Bergoglio. He thought she was going to thank him for the Christmas food basket the parish had sent to her. “Did you receive the basket?” Padre Jorge asked her. “Yes, yes, thank you for that, too,” the mother explained. “But I came here today to thank you because you have never stopped calling me *Señora.*”

Regarding each person as deserving of great dignity and honor is a good challenge for us as we daily call to mind that *now is the time!*

Welcome New Sister Students

The Sisters living at the Motherhouse welcomed two new Sister students this fall. They share Community with us while attending Silver Lake College of the Holy Family.



Sister Eusebia Nicholaus Urassa, CPS is a Missionary Sister of the Precious Blood from the East African Province. Sister was born seventh into a family of six brothers and five sisters. One brother, Fr. Edward Shefre Nicholaus Urassa,

AJ, in late 2016, was transferred to the Apostles of Jesus US Region and appointed as an Associate Pastor at St. Andrew the Apostle Parish, Chandler, Arizona. Fr. Edward arrived in Phoenix on February 21, 2017.

Sister comes from northern Tanzania and was born in the vicinity of the great Mount Kilimanjaro. She felt the call to religious life much earlier in her young life, but it was not until she taught three years and was 27 years old did she enter the Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood. Sister Eusebia traveled to South Africa in 2013 for her final profession preparation with other members of the province.

Sister attended Kilimanjaro Maramgu Teachers College and taught 5th - 7th graders for a total of 8-9 years as a government employee before coming to the United States in 2014.

She is majoring in English and education and minoring in math expecting to return to Tanzania to teach secondary school unless her Community has other needs. Sister likes gardening, socializing, and music. (She is presently taking lessons from Sister Winifred Crevier.)

Sister Mary John Lam, OP is a member of the Dominican Sisters of Mary Immaculate Province in Houston, Texas.



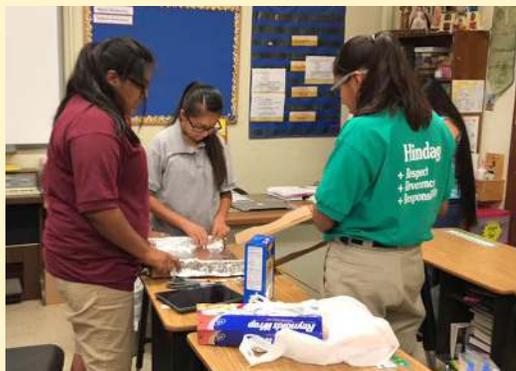
Sister was the eighth child born into a family of nine in a small village of South Viet Nam. After the fall of Saigon in 1975, her father with two daughters and a son attempted to escape Viet Nam, twice being arrested before finally escaping safely to the U.S. in 1983. Her mother stayed to raise the other six children. Sister was two when her father left. Sixteen years later (March 1999) she, her mom, and the rest of her siblings were finally reunited with her dad in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Feeling called to religious life, she entered the Dominican Sisters in Houston not aware that they belonged to the Dominican Sisters of Than Tam, Vietnam where her former classmate had entered. They were in the same class for first vows in 2007. Sister Mary John pronounced final vows in 2013.

Sister was missioned to Mary Immaculate Preschool and taught two to five year olds and volunteered to teach Sunday school in second grade at parishes in Houston.

She is majoring in early childhood education and minoring in Theology. Her Vietnamese name, Mai-Thao, means *tomorrow's flowers in the woods*.

Bapchule, Arizona—Sister Carol Mathe's Junior High Science classes teamed up and created solar ovens one week and the next week they baked in their solar ovens! The 'cuisine' consisted of a healthy meal of s'mores and pizza!!! God Bless You Sister Carol! Your patience is amazing!





Celebrating World Day of Peace

Green Bay, Wisconsin—Messages of peace were very evident at Holy Family School on September 21. To celebrate World Day of Peace, the students and teachers formed a peace sign on our playground to show their peaceful companionship. On the lawn near St. Agnes Church, pinwheels bearing words of peace blew in the wind. Tolerance, acceptance, harmony, love were words decorating the pinwheels. A few quotes from outside sources were also displayed. “Peace begins with a smile.” – Mother Teresa. “When the power of love overcomes the love of power, the world will know peace.” – Jimmy Hendrix. Words from our students captured the meaning of peace. “War is bad



Sister Ann Carla records some of the sayings on the pinwheels.

because the commandment says ‘Do not kill.’” “Harmony is not just for the choir; it’s for our lives, too.” May God bless all those who live and promote peace.

Submitted by Sister Ann Carla Baumann

Picture IT



Sisters Juden Lang, Pamela Biehl, and Delores Wisnicky enjoyed an outing to Bookworm Gardens in Sheboygan, Wisconsin. They enjoyed a lovely time walking and exploring the gardens after their picnic lunch and discussion. Many families were there with little ones going in and out of little houses or gardens—so much for them to do! A wedding also took place while they were there. They praised God for the beauty and wonder of flowers...



Cambridge, Ohio—Sisters Helen Marie Paul, Jan Villemure, June Smith, and Sharon Paul joined a table of people from Christ Our Light Parish in attending the Open Arms Pregnancy Center annual fundraising banquet on September 14th at the Pritchard Laughlin Center.

Franciscans of the Delta Gather Over Labor Day

Sunday of Labor Day weekend was a wonderful occasion of sharing, laughter, food and Franciscan joy for the Sisters of Mound Bayou and Greenwood along with the Franciscan Friars of Greenwood. Following the Sunday Liturgy at St. Fran-

cis all gathered at the Convent for the afternoon.

Shared stories of labors in the Lord’s vineyard, memories of growth in the Franciscan life, and joy in the delicious food shared, were all voiced in the simple spirit of St. Francis.



Sharing the Journey

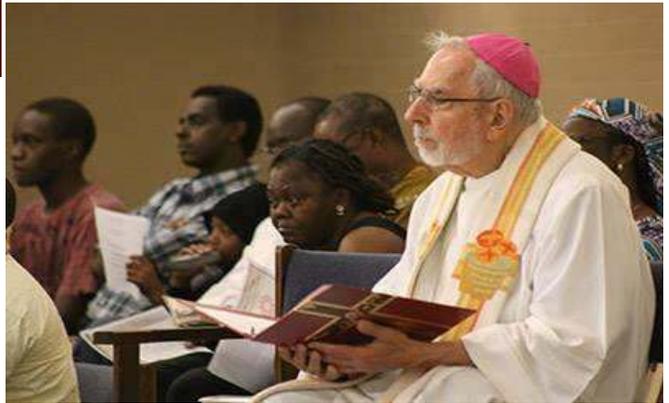
More than 350 people, including more than 20 religious leaders from many faiths, migrants, refugees, and concerned community members- gathered at St. Cyril's Church for a beautiful multi-faith gathering held in connection with the launch of the **Share the Journey** campaign by Pope Francis.



Four of our Sisters from San Xavier participated along with four San Miguel high school seniors. Sister Leonette Kochan was one of the principle organizers. Below are some of the reflections written by Sister Mary Ann Spanjer's students.

My favorite part from the prayer service was when one of the speakers asked for all of the refugees to stand up. Everyone in the room clapped for all of the people standing and gave everyone a blessing.

Another part that really touched me was a student from Salpointe Catholic High School who is a junior, migrated to the United States in 2011; he was disconnected from his oldest brother who is still in Sudan... I really enjoyed having him as a speaker because he is someone who is my age that had to experience so much as a child and it made me realize how I should be truly grateful for everything that I have because there is so much going on in the world and I am blessed



Bishop Gerald Kicanas participated in the multi-faith gathering.

to be who I am and where I am. People come to the United States because they are searching for peace.

The Church opens up our arms to refugees. We are all here for them and want to make them feel they are in a safe place (Samantha Mejia)

One thing that surprised me was what the bishop said, "everyone has a journey, some journeys are more terrifying than others." One of the major things that hit me was that kids my age were telling their stories. It made me feel so ashamed because I feel like I am not very grateful with everything that I have. (Danabi Zamora)

Submitted by Sister Mary Ann Spanjers