



New Clinic Location Blessed

When the Foot Clinic, the Health Clinic, and the St. Rita Health Center Team Leaders and Medical Assistant moved together on second floor of the St. Rita Health Center wing, it was announced that “an open house was planned for March 19, the feast of St. Joseph, in honor of our maintenance crew who did an awesome job preparing the place for our move.” A special blessing service took place March 19 before the open house.



L to r: Sisters Mary Kaye Winkler and Anne Turba, Fr. Jerry Prusakowski, and Barbara Backus.

Sisters Help with Sand Bagging Efforts



West Point, Nebraska—With the water almost to the top of the levee protecting the city from flooding, **many** volunteers helped to fill sandbags at the Fire Station. Thousands of bags were placed on top of the levee and did keep the Elkhorn River from flooding part of town. Sister Elizabeth Ann Miller and Sister Patricia Linszen were able to help with the effort on March 15. Please keep in your prayers those who have suffered so much damage to fields, buildings, and animals around eastern Nebraska.

—*Sister Patricia Linszen*

Sister Leonette Attends HOPE Border Institute



L to r: Sister Gladys Echineque, OP, Diocese of Tucson Director of Hispanic Ministry, Rocio Zamora, Bishop Gerald Kicanas, Sister Leonette Kochan

Representatives from the Diocese of Tucson, including Sister Leonette Kochan, attended a gathering of the HOPE Border Institute (HOPE) in El Paso, TX, Feb. 25-27. HOPE is an independent grassroots community organization working in the El Paso-Ciudad Juarez-Las Cruces region that seeks to bring the perspective of Catholic social teaching to bear on social realities unique to this region and to deepen solidarity across borders.

This gathering coincided with the twice-yearly meeting of the Tex-Mex Bishops (bishops from the Texas and Mexican border dioceses), which enabled the bishops to occasionally join the Institute conversations.

The approximately 75 participants from various social ministry organizations around the country included USCCB representatives from CRS, USCCB, Migration and Refugees Services, and Catholic Legal Immigration Network. Outcomes of the gathering included the participants setting priorities and SMART goals related to immigration in the areas of Theology (faith-based actions), Advocacy, Education/Formation, and Action.

One highlight of the gathering was an interfaith prayer service and blessing at the Anapra, NM border with

participants from both the U.S. and Mexico border towns. Prayer was led by Bishop Mark Seitz of El Paso and included witness talks by a DACA student and the wife of a refugee being held at a detention center.

A second highlight was participating at Mass and breakfast with approximately 50 refugee asylum seekers, which included parents and children. Mass and breakfast was held at the refugee center on the grounds of the EL Paso Diocesan Office complex. All of the bishops from the Tex-Mex dioceses joined the refugees and HOPE participants for Mass and breakfast.

Our tradition of honoring the dignity of each person was truly visible in the compassion and welcome extended to the refugees at Mass, with celebrant Archbishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller of San Antonio and all present, and through the courtesy and elegance with which they were served at breakfast. Needless to say, all departed the HOPE gathering inspired and challenged by our call to ministry among our migrant brothers and sisters.



Sister Carol Ann Gambsky shares this picture taken March 2, 2019 around 1:45 pm. The ice hangs over the dining room windows at Saint Francis Convent. She also sent some pictures to WBAY and they posted them.

Sister Alexandra Honored in Yuma



Yuma, Arizona—On February 25, 2019 the Knights of Columbus of Yuma had their annual religious appreciation dinner. They recognized and honored three religious

from the area for their dedication and support to the Yuma community. Sister Alexandra Bettinardi was honored for her years of service to Yuma Catholic high school since it began in 2000. Her expertise, support and friendship have endeared her to many throughout the years.

Sister Alexandra arrived in Yuma in 2000 at the opening of Yuma Catholic High School as the Executive Secretary for the President. From the beginning she watched every completion and expansion of the school, from the floors to the rooms and additional buildings. Her accomplishment throughout the years was her steady, professional and excellent organization

and business office skills providing the support and friendship to those who needed projects carried through. Although she may be heard to say that her real job was to keep Fr. Friel in line, her genuine interest and care in others along with her dry humor and twinkle in her eyes have endeared her to so many in the Yuma community. You can't go anywhere with her without someone coming up with a big smile on their face and a warm greeting. The lives of former students, parents, colleagues and friends have been touched by her presence among them.

—*Sister Mary Beth Kornely*

40 Days for Life



St. Louis, Missouri—Sister Sue Ann spoke to the group gathered in

front of Planned Parenthood for the rally for 40 Days for Life on Wednesday, March 6. She reminded the group that Archbishop Carlson wanted a convent close to Planned Parenthood because it would have a chapel with the Blessed Sacrament. He believes that "prayer is the one thing that would overcome this evil of abortion." She welcomed the group to stop by for prayer and hospitality.

Sister Sue Ann concluded her talk with these words. "Taking on the heart of Christ you also have never forgotten, never given up, been

patient, persevering, persistent, hopeful, watchful and fearless as you are vigilant to save the precious gift of life in a mother's womb."

Let us pray that the Holy Spirit open the minds and hearts of every man, woman and child to once again hear and listen to the law God has placed within them and written upon their hearts. It is the law of love for all stages of a baby. Our Lady of Guadalupe, save your children, we pray.

—*Sister Delores Vogt*

Lenten Series: Temporary Professed Sister Offers Rock Climbing Wisdom

Sister Mary Teresa Bettag offered the first of a Lenten Series shared on: <https://fsc-calledtobe.org/category/franciscanized-world/>

When I first entered the convent, one of my first questions was, “Will I ever be able to rock climb again?” I LOVE rock climbing – there is something very pure and natural about it. Many people think it takes just brute strength, but it also takes balance, composure, and an eye for the holds; because the thing is, when you’re hanging high above the ground, the thing you’re holding on-to is very important. A good hand or foot hold propels you higher, while a bad one can cut up your hands or lead to a nasty fall.

This Lent perhaps a question for all of us is: What is it that I am holding on to? What is my rock? Can we say with the psalmist, “My soul clings to you, Lord; your right hand holds me fast”?



“What is your favorite part of being a Sister?” This was asked of the Sisters while visiting with students—Sister Cecilia Joy reflects: I am truly grateful that God called me to be a Sister. There are so many beautiful aspects of this vocation, but I would have to say my favorite parts are living in Community, being able to serve in ministry, and having the time to develop a deeper relationship with Jesus. We Sisters are truly like a family. It is a blessing to be able to pray together, learn from each other, and laugh with one

another. God has called me to a place where I can use my gifts and talents in His service. Videography used to simply be a job for me, and now it is a way to share God’s love and spread His messages of hope. All of this work stems from prayer. I enjoy being able to wake up in the morning and talk with the love of my life, knowing He will be with me through whatever the day brings. He also speaks to your heart as well. May you experience His peace, and if He calls you to visit us, I look forward to meeting you again!

Novice Returns to Warhawk Catholic Home

Second Year Novice, Sister Cecilia Joy, shares on her homecoming to Warhawk Catholic, University of Wisconsin, Whitewater.

God blesses us with the gift to be a part of many different families throughout our life. The UW-Whitewater Catholic Student Coalition (now Warhawk Catholic) was very much a supportive family for me when I was working toward a degree and discerning religious life a few years ago. God gifted me with the opportunity to return as a religious sister to visit during one of the Warhawk Catholic’s weekly sessions on March 13th.



It is not every day that I am able to share my vocation story with people who were there as God unfolded His plan. Brian Zanin, the campus minister, surprised me by inviting some of my friends who have also graduated or are almost graduating to the event. This was a surprise that answered unspoken prayers. There were many laughs and memories shared, but it was the questions asked which carried the night. Even though I had just met many of the students, I could also feel a sense of family as they asked about discernment, growing in faith during college, and favorite Bible verses.

JUST Gospel!

By Sister Kathleen Murphy
Social Justice Commission

Have you memories of watching episodes of the daily drama in the lives of the characters of M*A*S*H?

Here viewers got a look into the daily operations of a battlefield medical hospital during the Korean War. Though there were occasional direct attacks on the facility, they usually faced the most danger when they traveled away from the hospital. Like so many humane practices, this accepted avoidance of attack on hospitals and medical facilities has slipped away. Pope Francis recognizes the current daily danger endured by humanitarian workers in so many battle zones. He gives us this intention: *For doctors and their humanitarian collaborators in war zones, who risk their lives to save the lives of others.*

A seasoned worker in the organization “Doctors Without Borders” granted an interview to a reporter from National Public Radio in 2016. But he says over the last few years there's been a dramatic increase of aerial attacks on its clinics or hospitals it supports. Those have been in Yemen, Syria and Afghanistan, on civilian medical facilities that should be untouchable under international humanitarian law.

The doctor says his organization is pushing all countries to adhere to international law protecting health facilities. He says it's hard to keep staff if they don't know they're protected.

Airstrikes aren't the only threat that has increased. The worker says in almost every ongoing conflict in the world, abduction has become a routine strategy of warring parties. Kidnappers looking for money or headlines target the group's medical workers from the international community. “Because they tend to have, to say it very crudely, the highest market value . . . It's actually mostly Western staff, and if I dare



say so, [it's the] white Western staff who is most at risk,” says Dr. Hofman.

Hofman says it's critical that Doctors Without Borders—like all humanitarian aid agencies—remain impartial. That includes never turning away a patient, no matter which side he or she is on, as well as not

accepting security details from either side of any conflict.

With some knowledge of the problem, we can turn to integrating these ideas into our spiritual practices. *Gaudete et Exsultate*, in its treatment of the Beatitudes speaks of those who mourn. “The world has no desire to mourn; it would rather disregard painful situations, cover them up or hide them. Much energy is expended on fleeing from situations of suffering in the belief that reality can be concealed. But the cross can never be absent. A person who sees things as they truly are and sympathizes with pain and sorrow is capable of touching life's depths and finding authentic happiness. Such persons are unafraid to share in the suffering of others; they do not flee from painful situations. They discover the meaning of life by coming to the aid of those who suffer, understanding their anguish and bringing relief. Knowing how to mourn with others: that is holiness.”

Though we do not dwell in a frontier hospital enduring bombs and attacks of all sorts, we can touch those who suffer each day in smaller ways. Our prayers can touch the entire suffering world while our gentle hand, reassuring smile, or supportive word can dignify the suffering of one who crosses our path in the day-to-day round of life. Let us pray for those who join with those who have dire reasons for mourning as well as those who mourn in quiet ways each day.

News Bits



Cambridge, Ohio—St. Benedict's School Annual Auction was held on Saturday, March 2. The Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity offered for Auction "A Brunch for Six," and an "Art Basket" with many supplies. Sr. Jan Villemure gave a Quilt donated by her cousin, Patricia Norman. Sr. June Smith crocheted scarves, bats and hand warmers Sr. Carol made a quilt called: "Kaleidoscope of Color." Sr. Sharon Paul donated two baskets: "Hit the Nail on the Head," with carpentry tools and one called: "Family Game Nite," with many games to play.

—Sister Sharon Paul

Greenwood, MS—The Sisters planned a celebration to honor Sister Judith Norwick on her 60th jubilee—which included her renewing her vows at the parish Mass followed by many friends and parishioners congratulating her. The celebration continued at the convent with dinner and gifts.



Sister Judy Norwick



Sister Delores Vogt and Sister Sue Ann Hall celebrated the feast of the Annunciation with a treat from Ted Drewes Frozen Custard—a family owned business that came to St. Louis in 1930. The business is closed only in January. It was 67 degrees—a perfect day to eat frozen custard outside. We weren't the only ones who decided it was a good day for frozen custard on the Historic Route 66. A regular customer gave us this advice, "Never come to Ted Drewes Frozen Custard after a Cardinal's Game because this is where many fans come."

Sister Pam Shares Her Vocation Story

Winneconne, Wisconsin—Last month one of the middle school catechists at St. Mary's Church was planning a lesson on the sacrament of marriage. She thought it would be a great idea if she asked not only a married couple to come in and talk about their call to marriage but she also decided to ask a deacon and a religious Sister to share their vocation story as well. Sister Pam Biehl, Pastoral Leader of St. Mary's, met with the middle school girls and Deacon Greg Grey met with the boys for a thirty minute lesson on their call to religious life and the diaconate.



Sister Pam told the young women that God calls each of us during our life through events, people, and prayer. Then she gave them personal examples from her own life explaining how God called her to religious life through events, people and prayer. She also spent some time explaining the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience and then closed the lesson with asking the young women to share ways they have already experienced God calling them in their own daily life. It was so interesting listening to their stories of how they have seen God working in simple but profound ways in their lives.

Survivor of the 1994 Rwanda Genocide Spoke in West Point



The aprons worn by all the helpers at Immaculée Ilibagiza's talks were made by women in Rwanda from scraps of material. All proceeds from the aprons sales go back directly to these women.

West Point, Nebraska—Recently St. Mary Parish hosted Immaculée Ilibagiza—a survivor of the 1994 Rwanda genocide. Immaculée is a living example of faith put into action. Her life was transformed dramatically during the 1994 Rwandan genocide where she and seven other women spent 91 days huddled silently together in the cramped bathroom of a local pastor's house.

While in hiding, anger and resentment were destroying Immaculée's mind, body and spirit. It was then that Immaculée turned to prayer. Prior to going to the pastor's home, Immaculée's father, a devout Catholic, gave her a set of rosary beads. She began to pray the rosary as a way of drowning out the anger inside her, and the evil outside the house. It was that turning point towards God and away from hate that saved Immaculée.

Immaculée spoke powerfully about:

- Overcoming struggles
- The power of forgiveness
- The miracles of the Rosary—the prayer that saved her life
- The love of Our Lady of Kibeho
- Why LOVE is the greatest commandment.

—*Sister Patricia Linszen*

Sisters Hosted in Cambridge



Cambridge, Ohio—St. Benedict's Church and Convent, hosted Sister Maria and Sister Marina from Minsk, Belarus. They are members of the Sisterhood of St. Elisabeth. One of the Sisters visited us two years ago.

They bring their beautiful artwork, statues, icons and religious goods to sell to help support their ministries. Their ministries are: a psychiatric hospital, homes for disabled adults and children, rehab centers for men and women, Thirty Workshop Stations, and Sunday school for children.

One of their Sisters commented: "The rehab center specifically is a territory that belongs to God; grace dwells there and penetrates into human hearts, making them think about God, repent and lead a different life. Each person bears God's image."
—*Sister Sharon Paul*



Aconites:
Promise
of Spring!

Employees Honored at HFC

Manitowoc, Wisconsin—Seventeen employees of Holy Family Convent were honored for their years of service during a special dinner on Sunday, March 24. Sister Elaine Turba, Human Resource Director, extended gratitude to the employees and their guests on behalf of all the Sisters. This years celebrants work in housekeeping, food service, nursing, business office, and at St. Francis Convent.



30 and 15 year Celebrants 1 to r: Janice Flaim and Julie Herzfeldt.



10 year Celebrants 1 to r: Connie Raetber, Joan Marquardt, Tabita Rick, and Kim Leitermann. Other 10-year celebrants not pictured: Mary Dondlinger, Heidi Hackmann, and Laura Schub.



5-year Celebrants 1 to r: Brooke Paider, Melissa Boll, Sharon Sprang, Jamie Zeman, Dawn Loughnan, and Jeanie Estrada. Other 5-year celebrants not pictured: Karen Pagels and Sara Riesterer.

LET US PRAY FOR THE DECEASED



SISTER THELMA WIESE

Sister died at the Motherhouse on March 19, 2019 at the age of 82.

She was professed 64 years.