

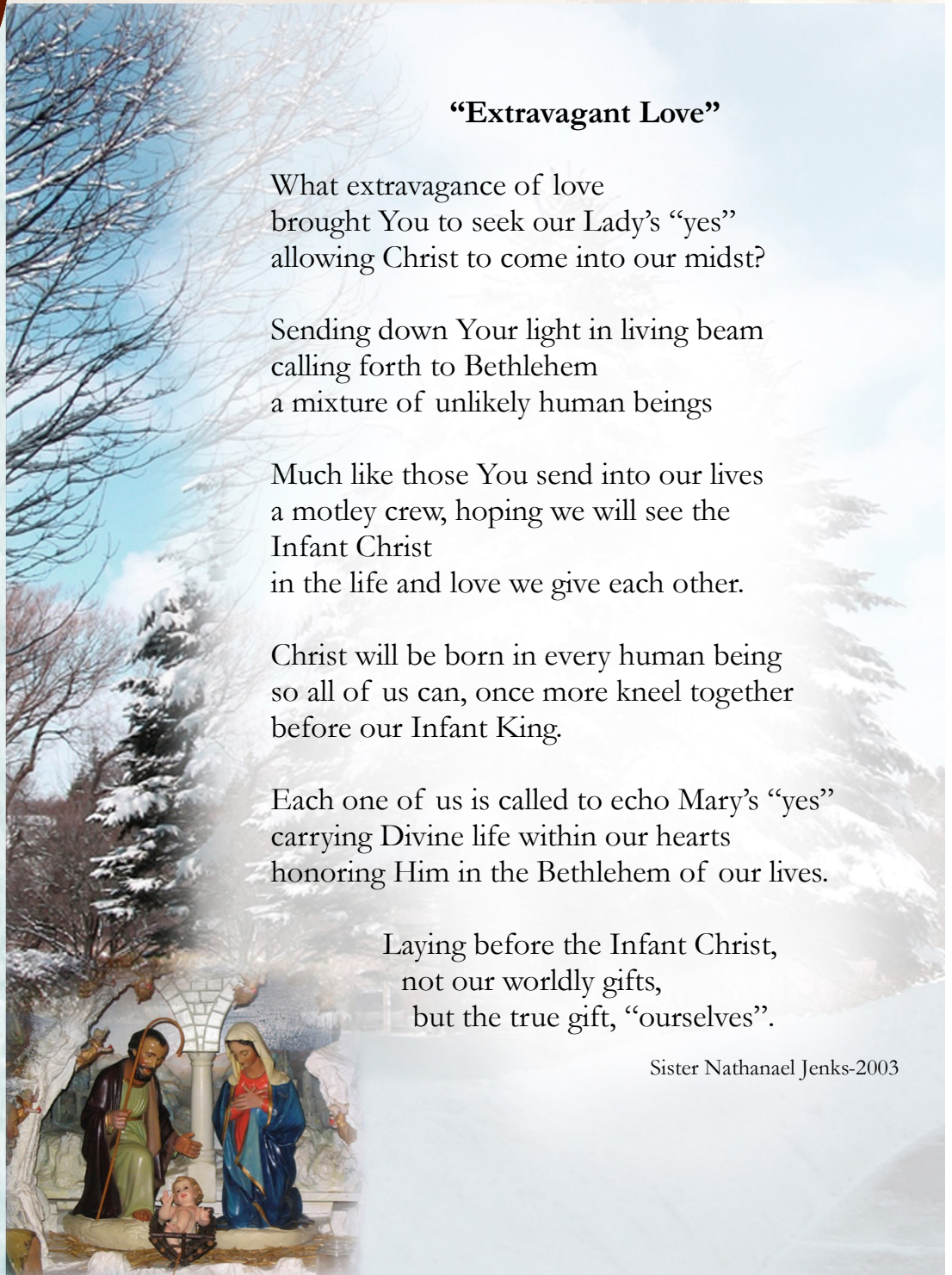


FRANCISCAN SISTERS OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY

Communigram

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“Extravagant Love”

What extravagance of love
brought You to seek our Lady’s “yes”
allowing Christ to come into our midst?

Sending down Your light in living beam
calling forth to Bethlehem
a mixture of unlikely human beings

Much like those You send into our lives
a motley crew, hoping we will see the
Infant Christ
in the life and love we give each other.

Christ will be born in every human being
so all of us can, once more kneel together
before our Infant King.

Each one of us is called to echo Mary’s “yes”
carrying Divine life within our hearts
honoring Him in the Bethlehem of our lives.

Laying before the Infant Christ,
not our worldly gifts,
but the true gift, “ourselves”.

Sister Nathanael Jenks-2003

Founding Day Celebration in West Point

West Point, Nebraska—On the weekend of our 150th Anniversary, Nov. 9-10, Sisters Joy, Elizabeth Ann, Kay Warning, and Patricia Linssen celebrated with the people of West Point and the surrounding area.

In the weeks leading up to this celebration, some information about our Community and its 134-year history in West Point and some photos of Sisters who had served here over these years were published in the *West Point News*.

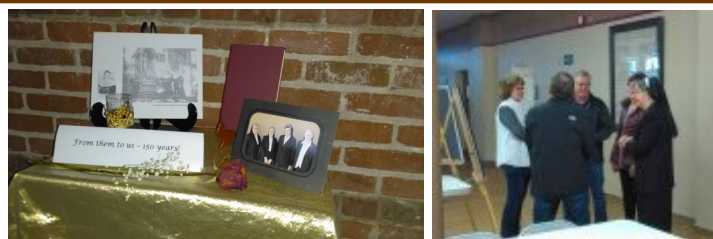
The Sisters used the Liturgy of the Hours from our summer celebration. The 6:00 PM Mass at St. Mary's Church on Nov. 9 was offered for all the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity. Sister Elizabeth Ann lectured at this Mass. It was followed by a reception in the school cafeteria, with cookies, water and punch for the guests.

On Sunday, Nov. 10, the Sisters hosted an open reception in the cafeteria for the public from 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Those who came enjoyed freshly baked sweet rolls and breads with coffee, juice, or water. The Sisters mingled with the people so they could thank them for their support and generosity over the years.



There were displays of photos for each organization – Guardian Angels Central Catholic, St. Joseph's Elder Services, and Franciscan Care Services – from the founding to the present. Two videos were also shown continuously, one on the July Celebration in Manitowoc and the other showing all the Sisters of the Community. Those attending enjoyed reminiscing about the past and seeing the pictures of the Sisters.

Many expressions of gratitude were extended to us as well for the generous service and positive influence of our Sisters on the people here. One person wrote on a card, "Just wanted to thank you all for what you do and what you have done for St. Mary's and the sur-



rounding community for all these years. Congrats on your 150 years! Imagine where we would all be without the Sisters here – I don't think I can. You've taught us and have taken care of us from beginning till the end." Another wrote, "You've given us so much and touched lives in so many ways. You are so tightly woven into the story of West Point and the success and positive results that have been achieved through the years is because 'you' brought out the 'Franciscan' in all of us."

—Sister Patricia Linssen

Sister on Vocation Panel



Second year novice, Sister Concepción Medina, was invited to Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic School, Sheboygan, to be part of a vocation panel on November 4. Students were able to ask questions about religious life, the priesthood, single life, and married life. Students from fifth through eighth grade attended and were very excited to be able to ask their questions.

Coffee House Visits Part of Our Vocation Ministry

Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity enjoy coffee house visits. It is a vital part of our vocation ministry. It allows for important conversations with young women who are serious about discerning their future, often also seeking to discover what God is saying in their prayer lives. Being Franciscan, we feel called to meet someone between the ages of 20-32 where she feels comfortable especially in the first stages of beginning discernment. This could be in her neighborhood or possibly a bit outside familiar territory. Lately, we visited La Finca in St. Francis, Wisconsin and Dunns Brothers in West Bend, Wisconsin.

La Finca, St. Francis, WI

For Franciscan Sisters, this place is in the perfect location. Really? St. Francis, Wisconsin!! It has an ambience of simplicity, warmth and invitation. It was easy to navigate to and park!



Postulant Mary Jane accompanied Sister Julie Ann Sheahan during a recent Coffee House visit.

We enjoyed our choice of drink in some lovely ethnic-decorated cups. In between conversations, we were able to spread out and work on papers and projects. The music was upbeat, but not distracting. There were some comfortable chairs for those who like that option. Windows reminded us that for the Franciscan the world is our cloister.

Dunn Brothers, West Bend, Wisconsin

Here's a bright sunny place to talk about the mystery of discernment. It's location on West Paradise Drive is a great reminder that God's ways can become clearer in the company of others and that there is good to be found in our world. A cup of freshly brewed coffee or great mango or strawberry smoothie makes the conversation refreshingly delightful. Owners and staff were very welcoming. Once again, when conversations cooled, it was an environment fitting for study or interesting reading.

—Sister Julie Ann Sheahan

Celebrating Franciscan Sisters' Sesquicentennial in Greenwood



Greenwood, Mississippi—Sister Kathleen Murphy shares moments of celebration of our Community's 150th Anniversary with the Franciscan Friars of the Assumption BVM Province serving at St. Francis of Assisi Parish



The Sisters and Friars gathered to celebrate Mass with a special commemorative liturgy. The chapel arrangement featured bricks and a stone candle along with a framed collection of communal historical pieces.



Fr. Camillus Janus celebrated Mass. The hearts were the focus of his homily. The largest heart is the heart of God whose love encompasses all. The next heart represents the Church, a gift to us from this loving God. The third heart represents the Franciscan Family whose focus is rejoicing in God's great love for us. The smallest heart represents the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity. We dwell in the depth of and surrounded by God's love with the mission of sharing and spreading this great gift of love.

JUST Gospel!

By Sister Kathleen Murphy
Social Justice Commission

December brings with it a focus on the Baby Jesus who grows into childhood. This liturgical focus finds its way into Pope Francis' intention for the month which is *That every country take the measures necessary to prioritize the future of the very young, especially those who are suffering*. This is a challenge that we can take to heart as we recall the many images that have littered our newscasts showing us suffering immigrant children at the mercy of our own laws and authorities.

Pope Francis has singled out the very young as the subject of our prayer. Why? Perhaps an art appreciation lesson will lead us to a better understanding.

Hanging in the US National Gallery of Art in Washington DC is a series of four paintings by Thomas Cole. The series is called "The Voyage of Life". Each painting depicts a stage of life: childhood, youth, manhood and old age.

The first painting is of childhood. It shows a moun-

tain with a dark cave at its base and a river flowing out of the cave. A beautiful boat glides out of the cave into a world of flowers in bloom, and a peaceful, gentle surface on the water. Inside the boat is a laughing baby with a Guardian Angel standing right behind. The painting shows childhood as a time of wonder and joy.

The second painting is called "youth". We see the same boat which has now travelled further downstream. The baby has grown into a teenage boy. He stands in the rear, confidently steering the boat towards a majestic white castle off in the distance. The riverbanks are still lush and green and the Guardian Angel stands on those banks, watching the young man. The painting shows youth as a time of dreaming and absolute self confidence that nothing can hold me back.

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Sisters Participate in Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service

An Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service was held at Westminster Presbyterian Church, New Concord, Ohio on Monday, November 25, 2019. Representatives from fourteen churches participated in the Thanksgiving Choir which totaled 72 members. Five people from St. Benedict's Church in Cambridge performed and Sister Carol Juckem and Sister Sharon Paul were among those participating. The Service had scripture, reflections, a litany of Thanksgiving, a sermon, organ and piano accompaniment and five songs were sung by the choir.

After the Service, refreshments and fellowship followed.

It was an evening of thanksgiving—for our country, for the church into which we have been called, for the Good News we receive by Word and Sacrament and for our life together in the Lord.

—Sister Sharon Paul

Top photo: Sister Carol Juckem shown in the choir,. Bottom photo: Sister Sharon Paul participating in the Ecumenical Choir.



Just Gospel (Continued from p. 4)

When we look at the third painting the scene has changed dramatically. The youth has become a man, the river has become a raging torrent, and the sky has become dark and threatening. The castle of dreams is nowhere to be seen and the boat's rudder has broken. Up ahead lie treacherous rocks, with white water crashing all around them. With the rudder broken he cannot steer his boat. All he can do is look up to the sky and pray. Meanwhile the Guardian Angel sits hidden in the clouds. Cole is picturing adulthood as a time when the joy and wonder of childhood have been tamed by the difficult and tragic experiences of life, when the confidence and boldness of youth have been swept away by the harsh realities of life.

The final painting is called "Old Age". The battered and weathered boat has finally reached the ocean. The dark clouds remain but the water is still. The boat's occupant is now an old man, and his gaze is fixed firmly on the clouds pierced by the glorious light of heaven. For the first time in his life the man sees the Guardian Angel that has accompanied him on his journey and who now prepares him for his journey into heaven.

This beautiful lesson achieved with a paintbrush reminds us of the importance of childhood, of the life of the very young. Without this time of wonder and beauty and security, life does not begin well and thus how can growth, striving and eventually, surrendering go well as life unfolds.

Whether we consider the future life of the Church, of our own nation or of the global community, protection and nurture of our very young is critical. These will be the ones to carry on and defend all that is right and good. These are the helpless ones and though we may not be able to personally feed them, house them or provide for their hygiene and health, we can be aware of those agencies around us that can provide this support. We can pray for their continued devotion to aid for the young. We can be in communication with legislators and other public officials regarding protection of the young, especially those who are poor and/or immigrants. We can pray for these little ones who mirror the exiled Babe of Bethlehem. We pray that they will be brought to safe harbor so that they may grow and develop and one day reach the wisdom of old age.

Present for Elizabeth Havier's Retirement Recognition

Tucson, Arizona—Our Sisters who have served on the Tohono O'odham Reservation will remember Elizabeth Havier. Elizabeth worked at San Solano Missions in Topawa, running the thrift shop and cleaning the monastery. Elizabeth is a friend of every Sister and Friar whom she met. She was often our companion hiking and mentored us in the O'odham himdag and language.

Sister Carla was fortunate to be present for the official recognition of Elizabeth's Retirement November 15, 2019. After the Vicariate meeting Elizabeth and her



sisters arrived and joined the group for lunch. Following lunch Elizabeth was given the Santa Barbara Province - Franciscan Service Award. Father Max Hottle and Sister Carla shared some memories of working with Elizabeth. It was a very special treat to have Father Clifford Herle

join us for a picture. Both priests worked on the reservation and now are living at San Xavier Mission.

—Sister Carla Riach

Meet the Sisters November 2019



Greenwood, Mississippi—The Thanksgiving version of Meet the Sisters began with a game of Comin' to America. Remiah was America and stood on a chair. She talks the blindfolded pilgrim maid who was on the Mayflower through the rocky shores of the New World. The other girls served as rocks. No crashes occurred.

Sister Janet Rose teamed up with Tania in a competitive game of "Roll the Turkey"!



Later all the young ladies gathered in the first-grade classroom to begin work on a "Grateful Heart" craft project.

Sister Maria Goretti Scandaliato and Sister Janet were bombarded with hungry young ladies who were eager for a picnic lunch!

Though outdoor temperatures were a bit chilly for a picnic, we brought the picnic indoors and all were as warm and toasty as their grilled hot dogs! Then, time for the best part...s'mores!

—Sister Kaathleen Murphy



NaProEthics Goes to Singapore



Omaha Nebraska—Last April I responded to a call for papers from a healthcare organization, Allied Academies, on the topic, "cutting edge issues in OB/Gyn" (women's healthcare). Hmph, I thought to myself: 'I think NaProTechnology and the FertilityCare System are genuinely cutting edge, so why not submit a paper on that?' Four months later I received word that my paper was accepted for a presentation at Gynecology 2019, a conference the Allied Academies was sponsoring in Singapore. I was quite excited, but since the sponsoring organization only paid for room and board and conference fees, but not for transportation I told the Lord I would only say 'yes' if I were able to raise the money for the very long round trip plane ticket (24-hour travel time).

After three or four generous donors paid for the ticket,

I was on the way. I was told two weeks prior to the conference that my paper was chosen as a keynote address, so that added a bit more pressure to everything. But on Founder's Day, November 9th, I flew with my Guardian Angel, the Foundresses and the throng of Saints surrounding me; arrived safely; delivered the lecture with gusto, and received quite a few positive comments afterwards from the physicians attending, most of whom were Asian and Middle Eastern.

I was invited to a marvelous Chinese dinner the evening before the conference by Dr. John Hui and his wife Geraldine (third and fourth from the left) who did the training in Omaha in NPT. The restaurant was just beautiful, nestled next to the Port of Singapore which I understand is the busiest port in the world. I was thrilled to be with the Hui's again and with Andy (fifth from the left), our FertilityCare practitioner who also trained with us. The Hui's invited Father David, a Dominican moral theologian at the seminary in Singapore (second from the left) so I could meet him and talk over moral issues. What an experience in the city/state/island of Singapore where the East meets West—a land of only 300,000 Catholics who are reportedly very devout. Singaporeans are kind, very attentive to tourists' needs and very polite. They could teach Westerners a thing or two about civility in public discourse. God bless Singapore!

—Sister Renee Mirkes

Sisters at Night of Hope for Catholic Education

Bapchule Arizona —Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity were present for the 12th annual fundraising dinner event for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Phoenix.

Recognizing that Catholic education is vital to the future of our Church, the mission of Night of Hope is to make a Catholic education in the Diocese of Phoenix affordable and accessible to those who truly want to bring up their children in a loving faith-filled environment. It is hoped that by increasing funding for scholarships throughout the diocese this may become a reality.

Sister Theresa Feldkamp, a member of our General Administration, was able to join the Sisters at St. Peter Mission for the evening.



Pictured with Bishop Olmstead Sisters l to r: Dora Lee Monian, Pamela Catherine Peasel, Carol Mathe, Theresa Feldkamp, Martha Mary Carpenter, Thereselle Arruda, Barbara Jean Butler, and Elena Gonzales.

Decorating at Pinecrest Historical Village



On Saturday, November 30th Sister Caritas Strodthoff, Sister Mariadele Jacobs, Postulant Mary Jane Schwartz and Novices —Sister Maria Guadalupe Martinez and Sister Concepcion Medina decorated the little church at the Manitowoc County Historical Society/Pinecrest Historical Village 924 Pine Crest Ln, Manitowoc.

How did the Community become involved with Pinecrest Village? In the early days of our Community archives, Sister Donna Marie joined the Manitowoc Historical So-

ciety and was a very active member, giving tours of the Motherhouse, giving talks at society meetings on the history of our community. She eventually received Lifetime membership for the community in the society. Sister Caritas remembers touring Pinecrest Historical Village when it was first organized and utilizing their genealogy resources when researching her own family roots. Over the recent years, she has continued this association with the Society doing volunteer services when able. Twice she tried maintaining a garden during the summer but it kept getting flooded out. Now she volunteers to bake cookies for special events such as Christmas, Lincoln's birthday party, and Halloween. Five years ago, when the request came out for volunteers to trim the houses for the annual Christmas Fest, she volunteered and was asked to do the Niles Church. She asks for the help of the Novices and Postulants when available. It also gives them a chance to see the village with anticipation of returning when it's in full swing and definitely warmer.