

Communigram

FRANCISCAN SISTERS OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY

Come and See

Now is a great time to ‘come and see’ the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity. Jesus Himself invited others to come and see for yourself. We, too, invite young women to learn about who we are and what we are like by being with us at our Motherhouse or convents throughout the



United States.

What touched the young women’s hearts during the February 21-23 weekend?

- Adoration time and thinking about the topics provided them. Just having some quality time with Jesus
- St. Francis Chapel was beautiful and I loved the Mary statue and just all the detail of the artwork. The Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help [Champion, Wisconsin] was beautiful. Also, just how wonderful all the Sisters are.
- I enjoyed the history of the building during the tour to see how rooted the church is in Christ.
- There’s a sense of comfort here at the Motherhouse. The Sisters are warm and generous. There’s so much art and life!
- Sister Jackie’s talk on the Bridegroom was very beautiful—reflected in both vocations.

Continued on page 2.

Formation Weekend at the Motherhouse

It was a weekend of learning table manners, meal preparation, and that all of it is nothing without love. Six Sisters in formation and a soon-to-be Sister (Mary Jane) gathered at the Motherhouse February 14th-16th for a formation weekend centered on Gracious Living. Sister Marie Kolbe Zamora set the tone right away on Friday with a Spirit-filled discussion about Hannah, Mary, and how these two women speak to us about desires. How do I receive God’s revelation of my consecration? We were given a quiet evening of prayer to ponder that before a whirlwind tour through etiquette with Sister Annette Kurey the following day. The time was filled with interactive presentations, special guests, and a humorous exercise on how to graciously accept a gift. But perhaps the most memorable moments came from just being with each other in Community and catching up on where Jesus has been leading each of us. We are so grateful for your support and prayers throughout the weekend.

—Sister Cecilia Joy Kugel



Those in formation attending the formation weekend are front row l to r: Sister Cecilia Joy Kugel, Sister Mary Teresa Bettag, and Postulant Mary Jane Schwartz; Backrow l to r: Sister Maria Guadalupe Martinez, Sister Concepción Medina, Sister Clare Rose Oswald, and Sister Colleen Demro.

Come and See (Continued from page 1.)



Sister Mary Ann Spanjers reflects on a recent visit with students at Grand Canyon State University, Phoenix, Arizona.

What part of the weekend did some of the young women find the most helpful?

- I found the trip to the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help to be helpful. I had some time alone to think and pray without distraction.
- Having set adoration times and living in community with the sisters gave an insight into the lifestyle.
- Spending time and asking questions; sitting with different sisters at meals and listening to their stories. It is good to see the variety of people in this religious order.
- The quiet holy hours were very good but I also enjoyed playing with the younger sisters because it rounds out my perception of them as people who have individ-

ual gifts. It was easier to ask questions after that.

- I found the night we spent with the novices and postulant helpful because it was a good opportunity to get to know each Sisters' life.

It is important to be willing to investigate, to ask, and consider who Jesus is. Each of us is also asked to consider how and why I would want to follow Him.

Young women ages 20-32, may find our March 14, Cistercian Nuns and Franciscan Sisters Silent Discernment of Spirits Day, helpful.

Young adult professional women, might want to consider the March 20-22 Lenten Franciscan Discernment Offering for Young Professionals.

—Sister Julie Ann Sheahan

Receiving an invitation from one of my former San Miguel students to visit her Grand Canyon University Newman Center to talk about discernment and Religious Life was truly a blessing! GCU is in Phoenix so I invited Sister Pamela Catherine Peasel to join me in sharing about her journey as well! Sister Martha Mary Carpenter and Sister Thereselle Arruda also came! The young women were very welcoming and enjoyed hearing from each of us!

There is a special spirit at GCU Newman Center, they are committed to their faith and desiring to grow deeper! Spending the evening with them filled me with hope for the Church! Time included good pizza and delightful encounters! May the Holy Spirit continue to touch these young women with the strength to respond to Jesus' call to follow him! It was a blessed time. Some of the students are actually doing service at St. Peter Indian Mission, Bapchule, Arizona in the next weeks

Sister Speaks at Elizabeth Ministries Retreat



Elizabeth Ministries International recently invited mothers and daughters to escape from everyday routines and participate in activities created to bond their relationships. Sister Cecilia Joy Kugel was invited to be part of the retreat team.

The retreats were planned to get away from things that normally distract participants and allow them to laugh, listen, and talk with each other! Intentional conversations, informative talks, fun crafts, and other special mother and daughter times of connection were part of the overnight experience. There were four levels of moms and daughters of age 4-10+.

Connected 2020 includes Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity

Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity continue to have good recent memories of Holy Family Parish, Marinette, Wisconsin. Sister Jan Villemure and Sister Clare Rose Oswald were invited for Connected 2020, a youth-friendly event organized by Faith Formation Director, Jeri Keepers and team.



The theme of the gathering was making and maintaining healthy friendships. 50 young people from Marinette, Menominee, Peshtigo, and Crivitz were in attendance. Sister Jan and Sister Clare Rose shared stories on how did they know Jesus was calling. A married couple was also invited to share about their calling from God. The spiritual experi-

ence was complete with Praise and Worship music and Eucharistic Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

Young people were encouraged to develop relationships with each other enjoying a taco bar and treats.

Life-like Robotic Cats Bring Smiles and Solace

We are grateful to the generous donor who surprised St. Rita Health Center Sisters with these delightful cats. The cats provide entertainment by meowing, purring, blinking eyes, wiggling ears, turning over and putting up a paw as if licking it. Also, the cats bring much solace and comfort even when not in action. —Sister Elizabeth Bennie

According to <https://joyforall.com/products/companion-cats>:

“The JOY FOR ALL Companion Pet cats look, feel and sound like real cats. But they're so much more than soft fur, soothing purrs and pleasant meows. These cats respond to petting, hugging and motion much like the real ones you know and love but don't require any special care or feeding. This personally rich experience can bring joy and comfort to aging loved ones without any vet bills to worry about.

“Built-in sensors respond to motion and touch producing cat-like movements and sounds. Realistic, soft fur looks and feels like a real cat VibraPurr™ sounds and feels like real purring.”



1. Sister Johanna Kalscheur with Toni named by Sister Antonita Diederich. 2. Sister Francette Riebe comforting Beauty. 3. Sister Annette Blonde holding Boots. Photos 1 and 2 by Team Leader, Nichole. Photo 3 by Sister Elizabeth Bennie



Early morning guests, nurse Kate and her children brought Valentine cookies to frost and enjoy with the Sisters in St. Rita Health Center.



This photo shows the doors of a Chinese Catholic church. The church has been emptied of all religious symbols, named as a forbidden space, and sealed to deny anyone entrance under severe penalties. This is part of the current picture of the Church in China. Thus, it is no surprise that Pope Francis calls us to pray this month for the Church of China. Our intention reads: *We pray that the Church in China may persevere in its faithfulness to the Gospel and grow in unity.*

Psalm 86:11 tells us, “Teach me your way, O LORD, that I may walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart to revere your name.” As the Holy Father calls for unity in the Chinese Church, we join our prayers for an undivided heart with which this beleaguered people may revere God’s name. Catholicism in China is often thought to be practiced in two distinct churches—one controlled by the government and named the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (CCPA), and one which follows the Pope’s leadership and is often labeled “The Underground Church”. In reality there is one Church in China, but it assuredly is a Church divided. Just as our own country currently endures deep divisions, yet remains one nation, so is the Catholic Church of China.

In broad strokes, the main and significant difference between the two factions is recognition of the Pope’s

leadership. Just during the past year Pope Francis and Vatican officials have worked out an agreement with the CCPA, however the terms of the agreement remain secret. This seems to have done little to heal the divisions of the faithful.

The Underground Church endures varying degrees of persecution ranging from imprisonment and kidnaping of priests and laity, to removal of religious symbols especially crosses on the outside of the churches. Destruction of church buildings is far too common and faith communities are often forced to meet clandestinely for Mass. In some places the faithful cannot be told the time at which Mass will be celebrated until one hour in advance of the liturgy. Gathering places for Mass must be changed with great frequency and laity and clergy alike may suffer if it is discovered that they have Bibles, prayer books, rosaries or religious images.

As we go peacefully to our chapels or churches each day, let us offer our prayers for those faithful who are denied this privilege. We especially pray for Catholics in China that they may persevere in carrying the cross of persecution in whatever form it may show itself. As we pray freely whenever and wherever we wish, let us lift up the Church of China that it may be blessed with the unity so near to Jesus heart as he said, “May they all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you. (Jn. 17:21)



From left: Sister Mardelle Meinholz, Judy Fidler, Jean Wakefield, Lori Raube, Sue Loeb and David Eis. Manitowoc County Habitat ReSale Center recently donated \$700 to the two-day bowling fundraiser Strike Out Breast Cancer. Sister Mardelle volunteers at the Habitat ReSale Center.

Sister Among Those at Right to Life Rally

West Point, Nebraska—Every year the students from Guardian Angels Central Catholic high school have attended the March for Life in Washington D. C. The thing that made it different this year is that we nearly filled the bus with just our students. There were 31 students, five chaperones, and our parish assistant Father Matt Niggemeyer as our bus chaplain. This was my third year in accompanying the students on the pilgrimage.

We left West Point on Tuesday, January 21 at 2:30 p.m. and headed to Omaha where we met up with the other schools from the archdiocese that were also attending. Nine buses with around a total of 450 students and chaperones gathered for a sending off Mass then got on our buses to travel 1,202 miles or 24 hours on the road. We stopped often for about a 20-minute break and a change of three drivers finally arriving in DC at 4:30 pm on Wednesday, Jan. 22. We ended our first day with Mass at St. Joseph Church, supper at Union Station, and settle into our hotel for a much-deserved sleep in a comfortable bed!

Day two into our trip we prayed outside of the Planned Parenthood building, toured the Holocaust Museum and strolled down the National Mall. Then the students from the Omaha archdiocese had Mass with our archbishop, George Lucas, in St. Matthew's Cathedral, and closed off the day attending the "Life is Very Good" rally with fellow marchers from across the country.

Day three began with Mass at the hotel. Next, we loaded our buses and gathered near Washington Monument for the rally before the march to hear speakers, including a visit and talk by President Trump. Finally, we began the march with over 400,000 other people passionate for life; starting from the park up Constitution Ave. to the Supreme Court. After standing from 10:00am till 4:30pm we joined thousands of people at the Union Station for dinner where we stood in long lines, shoulder to shoulder. I couldn't wait to get back to small West Point! Closing the day off we returned to the hotel to enjoy one last night's sleep in a bed.

Day four took us to the National Basilica of the Immaculate Conception for Mass then departed for Gettysburg National Military Park for a tour and dinner. We got back onto the bus for our long journey to West Point. We ended our pilgrimage with a closing Mass at St. Mary's and all returned home for a warm shower and a long night's rest.



Sister Elizabeth Miller was among the chaperones who accompanied the above group of students from Guardian Angels Central Catholic High School, West Point, Nebraska to Washington, D.C. to participate in the March for Life, January 24, 2020.

The students' shared their experience with the rest of the junior high and high school students during Catholic Schools week activities in hopes of encouraging enough students that next year the bus will be completely filled with GACC students. I believe it will happen. The trip was long and grueling but was well worth it to speak out for the protection of all life. The students I traveled with were wonderful, faith-filled young people and if my body is up to it next year I may be joining them again!

—Sister Elizabeth Ann



*From Bishop Edward Weisenburger's Wednesday [Feb. 5] Update: **Consecrated Religious Jubilee Mass** Sunday, Feb. 2, St. Augustine Cathedral, Tucson, Arizona, 10 a.m. This beautiful Mass takes place each year to celebrate the jubilees of the many Sisters and Fathers and Brothers working in our diocese. Their contributions are many and their devotion to service is a wonderful example to all of us. I encourage all of us to pray for these hard workers and the wonders they achieve through their good works. Our Sisters celebrating: 65 years, Sister Alexandra Bettinardi; 60 years, Sister Ann Mary Hart; 55 years, Sister Carla Riach; 50 years, Sister Mary Karen Oudeans; and 40 years, Sister Mary Ann Spanjers.*

Getting to Know the Sound of Music presented by St. Francis of Assisi Middle School

Manitowoc, Wisconsin—It was incredible to have the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity with us at the performances of The Sound of Music this weekend. My guess is that there were around 15 Sisters at each of the three shows. Your presence and vocational witness created a beautiful memory and strong impression on the students and families. Many referred to the taking of this picture as one of their favorite moments of the whole weekend. What a unique opportunity and gift it turned out to be!

—Dianne Vadney



Birds Make a Visit

During the last week of February a bird visited two of our missions. A cardinal visited St. Peter Indian Mission, Bapchule, Arizona and a hawk made a surprise visit to the St. Francis first grade classroom in Greenwood, Mississippi.



Cardinal Kids Camp-2020! Thank you Arizona Cardinals! Our kids had SO MUCH fun!! Coach Moe ROCKS!! You are WELCOME BACK at any time! Go Cards Go! We love the Cardinals!!

Greenwood—MS
A hawk, flew through the window glass into the first grade classroom.

Right: The first graders are settled into the cafeteria



for the rest of the day to work there in safety. Brother Mark and Mr. Lara began work on the window after school and soon had the new glass set in place. All was returned to normal and we pray that all God's creatures stay where they belong!

For the complete story read, *The Autobiography of a Misplaced Hawk* page 8.

News Bits and Pictures from Cambridge, Ohio



Would you believe that February 7th was the first snowfall of the Winter in Cambridge and the first snow day for St. Benedict's School? We enjoyed having Sister Leonette Kochan visit us too.

Open House was held at St. Benedict's School on Sunday, February 23. Parents, students and new families were welcomed to tour the school, visit with the teachers, and register.

← Sr. June Smith handing out registration forms.

The Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity at St. Benedict's Convent have completed their contributions to the annual Auction and Raffle for St. Benedict's School to be held on Saturday, March 7.



Sr. Carol Juckem is shown with her homemade quilt called: "Butterflies in My Flower Garden". Sr. Sharon Paul made three baskets to Auction: "Fun in the Kitchen," "Kitchen Fun," and a family game basket with games for the whole family called: "Basket of Fun". Sr. Helen Marie Paul made a quilt called: "Rainbows at Midnight."

Genre?

Imperial, Nebraska—What does one look for in the Bible? Truth? Religious Truth?

Designing a high school class for engaging CYO students on the nature and content of the Catholic Bible may be challenging. However, Sister Rochelle uses this devised method to help students understand that the Catholic Bible is a ‘collection’ of books, like the local public library in town.



Seniors Ben (with glasses) and Cord demonstrate that they have decided which library book would be a good fit with the book of the Bible as listed on their card. Sister Rochelle teaches on Sunday mornings after and before the 10:00 a.m. Mass at St. John Parish in Wauneta, Nebraska. This is one of the ‘mission’ parishes in the Grant Deanery.

As the class assembles, the first step is to use one’s personal I-phone to access the definition of ‘genre’: “*Noun; a category of artistic composition, as in music or literature, characterized by similarities in form, style, or subject matter. Synonyms: category, class, classification, grouping, etc.*”

After brief discussion, students are challenged to match an assortment of pre-selected library books with the various genres found in the Bible - given the name of a book in the Bible and its description on cards provided to them.

Students work in small groups, deciding which library book goes with which book of the Bible. They can disagree, challenge one another, work together, until there is a group consensus.

An example: The Book of Deuteronomy - (historical account of forming a nation-Israel) is matched with Steven

Tanner’s *Afghanistan (A political history from Alexander the Great to the Fall of the Taliban)* or The Book of Proverbs – (anthology of wise sayings) is matched with R.J. Palacio’s *365 Days of Wonder*.

This pre-staged activity helps students realize that **all the books in the Bible are true**; however, **not all the books in the Bible are using the same genre in providing truth**, especially religious truths. Students are encouraged not to take the Bible literally (black and white thinking), but “to search out the intentions of the sacred writers, attention should be given, among other things, to ‘literary forms.’ For truth is set forth and expressed differently in texts which are variously historical, prophetic, poetic, or other forms of discourse.” (Dei Verbum, Vatican II Document, Ch. 3, par. 12.)

—Sister Rochelle Kerkhof

Sister Present for Historic Point Catholic Retreat

Sister Julie Ann Sheahan was blessed to be present for the last Point Catholic Busy Student Retreat at the campus ministry building on 600 Whilshire Boulevard, Stevens Point, Wisconsin. Pastor Father Steve Brice and Campus Minister Jessica Enstad planned the yearly student retreat to coincide with a move to a new location at Holy Spirit Church a couple blocks away at the beginning of Lent.

Important to the retreat week for students was setting aside time each day for personal prayer time. All retreatants met with spiritual directors for a half hour each day for four days. Other directors included Patricia Pintens, Father Dennis Lynch and Sister Marla Lang, FSPA.

The Wednesday late night Mass was especially meaningful during mid-week and one filled with gratitude to God for all that was and is in the lives of the students. Students and parish members began moving furniture and other boxes of supplies to the new location on Saturday, February 15.



—Sister Julie Ann Sheahan

The Autobiography of a Misplaced Hawk (Continued from Birds page 6.)



Hawk: You may surmise that my misadventures began here in this hole bearing a resemblance to a batman entrance. I was on the hunt for a blackbird snack. Having set my sights on a bird I throttled up and sped after it. When it took a sudden left tack, I tried to apply my brakes to no avail. I found myself crashing into another world from which I could find no escape.

Vainly I searched for a tree or bush in which to hide—boxes were the highest perch I could find. While I pondered my plight, several humans became involved searching in vain for the source of the crashing noise. I was hiding out of sight. I learned that the first graders who inhabit this space had just stepped out for a bathroom break. I was glad for they would have been very scary to me. As I heard Sister Kathleen approaching with the class, I panicked and tried to get through that hole in the window and caused



more glass to crash. Sister readily spied me. I was so shocked by my failure to escape that I needed to land and regroup. Then after just a few seconds I heard all those little feet retreating and I breathed a relieved sigh!

That sense of relief didn't last long! Now I heard the feet of all the students being ushered to the cafeteria where there were no points of entry for me.

As I was adjusting to that noise, here came several men. This called for action, so I began cruising the room. My best choice seemed to be hiding behind the massive TV cabinet until Mr. Randle began to pound on the cabinet. Clearly this was no longer a safe haven. I decided to try intimidation and did a bit of a dive bomb on the police officer. No one ran out, so I toured the room again and spotted the hole in the window. Out I flew to freedom! *—Sister Kathleen Murphy*