

Communigram

FRANCISCAN SISTERS OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY

Celebrating with a Doughnut Palooza

Sisters living in the Motherhouse, St Rita's and St. Francis convent enjoyed a "Doughnut Palooza" the 2nd Sunday of Easter, provided by Sister Anne Turba's sister Judy and her husband Mike along with their friends Dan and Sarah. Judy and Mike have wanted to do something to help the Community celebrate the end of COVID in our home and came up with this plan over the winter months. Judy made and cut out 210 doughnuts on Saturday and froze them until they came on Sunday. Mike and Dan fired up their deep fat fryers and the frying began! Judy, Sister Mary Ann Spanjers and Sister Anne helped with applying a glaze or sugar cinnamon coating to the donuts. The hot doughnuts were served in the cafeteria along with a choice of coffee, hot apple cider and warm, spiced wine. Sisters in the Motherhouse paired with Sisters in St. Rita's and enjoyed their donuts and drinks together either in St. Rita's, the cafeteria or outside. God was especially kind to us in bringing the sun out and supplying some warmth so people could enjoy the outdoors if desired. There was much joy and laughter as we spent the afternoon visiting with each other. We realized this was the first time the three houses had gathered together in over a year. It felt so good.

—Sister Anne Turba



Dan, Judy, & Sarah (Pictures by Mike)

God Takes Us Where He Wills

Newton, Wisconsin—At the end of June, Sister Marlita Henseler will be leaving her post after 12 years of ministry as Pastoral Leader at St. Thomas the Apostle parish. She requested to serve in a capacity that could again enhance her Spanish, and also serve a need in the church. Originally, she hoped to find an orphanage in Mexico to love up kids in Spanish for a year! When that did not fall into place, she did find that at the US-Mexico border there is a Center that assists immigrants who are waiting to come into the USA for asylum (when that can happen!). It is about 1 ½ hrs. south of our Sisters in Tucson, Arizona. There are many needs for those waiting to enter.

Starting September 1, she will be a volunteer at the Kino Border Initiative Center in Nogales, Mexico, right over the border from Nogales, Arizona. This Center, about 12 years old, ministers to those stranded immigrants awaiting protection, some for as long as a year or more, as well, as those recently deported from

the US. This faith-based organization offers food, clothing, medical assistance, and programs for kids who have spent more than a year without education. There are also some legal services offered through Florence Project to help people better understand their rights. She will live with three Missionaries of the Eucharist, Mexican Sisters who all work at the Center, and another American, a Sister of Providence from Indiana, who is also employed there. As a volunteer, she could be peeling potatoes for a meal served every day to the immigrants, or sorting clothes to share, or do some teaching of children????? That will be the adventure part, as she will find out when she gets there. She hopes to serve where she can be of most help. She requests prayers, that as she ministers, she recognize the face of Jesus in all those who arrive there.



Sister Marlita

The Art of Spiritual Companionship

By Sister Anne Marie Lom



Each Thursday evening from April 8 through May 6, fifteen students located in Juneau, Alabama; West Hollywood, California (working in Hospice in Mexico); St. Cloud, Minnesota; Palm Bay, Florida; and in Green Bay, Townsend, Kaukauna, Merrill, Casco, New Berlin and Winneconne, Wisconsin gather via Zoom to learn, share, pray, and grow in the Art of Spiritual Companionship. Prior to this offering through the University of Wisconsin, Green Bay, Sister Anne Marie Lom taught this class through Holy Family College and the Diocese of Green Bay in Manitowoc, Oshkosh, and Green Bay. When approached by clients to offer training sessions, the search began for an established institution to credential stu-

dents giving fifteen plus hours, an official certificate. UWGB was found to offer an electronic badge through some of their Continuing Education courses. Through months of planning, organizing, and marketing, this course took shape. The fifteen students registered, Sister Anne Marie perfected her Zooming skills and we were off!

Questions have risen about an electronic badge. What is it? An electronic badge is issued which may be used on your website, email, and social media sites. When someone clicks on the badge, they can view the skills, issues, and content dealt with in the class. It certifies that you have attended the course and completed the skill set defined in the data. This badge tells an employer, prospective employer, client, and/or associate the skills they can expect you to exhibit.



If you want to learn more about the course, or if you may be interested in attending a future Spiritual Companionship course, use this link: <https://www.uwgb.edu/continuing-professional-education/certificate-programs/spiritual-companionship/>



Tucson, Arizona—The Monday after Easter is traditionally Emmaus Day. In remembrance of the disciples traveling to Emmaus Sisters Rosalyn Muraski, Mary Karen Oudeans, Clare Rose Oswald and Carla Riach traveled to Madera Canyon for a hike and picnic. Sister Mary Ann Spanjers took her mother home and assisted her in her appointments that day. Sisters Clare Rose and Carla were blessed to see four deer while hiking. In one of the spots where the stream was above ground they cooled off a foot. Sisters Rosalyn and Mary Karen enjoyed watching for birds, reading and just being in the woods. All enjoyed a picnic lunch together.

Baptismal Consecration: Living as “Baptismal Water” in the World

If we participated in the Easter Vigil this year, we were taken up into the Church’s joy at Jesus’ resurrection and the gift that his resurrection is for us. We might have heard the Church offer her overjoyed praise of Jesus the LIGHT of the world in the *Exultet*; we heard the triumphant proclamation of God saving the Israelites via WATER in the Old Testament. Water retains a central place at the Easter Vigil as water in the blessing of water. Through this water, we might have witnessed God continuing to save his people in the initiation of the catechumens into Christ and into His body, the Church.

“Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give.” ^{Matt 10.8} The gift of resurrection-life in Christ, communicated to us in the waters of Baptism, is a gift that we have received without cost. If we are to believe Jesus’ words recorded here in Matthew’s Gospel, we are to pay that gift forward “without cost.” How might we pay Baptismal life forward? Or, more concretely, **how might we live as Baptismal water** in the world?

The courage to ask such a question comes right out of John’s Gospel.

“[W]hoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” ^{John 4.14}

A spring of water welling up offers a dynamic image of water that benefits others. The person themselves certainly benefits from this water (eternal life), but welling up of the water suggests a flow that benefits the earth it waters. This makes sense when we call to mind the many times Pope Francis has observed that we are never saved by ourselves, but always with others.

“Let anyone who thirsts come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as scripture says: ‘Rivers of living water will flow from within him.’” ^{John 7.37}

Here, Jesus amplifies the water image. No longer is he speaking of a *spring*, nor does he even speak of a *river*, but he speaks of *rivers* that will flow from within the baptized. The energy suggested here indicates a flow that captures others. In other words, the gift we receive at our Baptism must overflow . . . we are invited to live as Baptismal water in the world.

What might water teach us about how we are to live as Baptismal water? In other words, how can we think symbolically about water so as to discern the flow of God’s life and love in and through us to the world around us?

A few “water lessons” come quickly to mind:

1. In the same water that water hydrates, giving life to the world, we might ask ourselves how we live as Baptismal water by offering spiritual “hydration” and life to the world. The Baptized are, in fact, vital for the spiritual life of the world. Think of the violence and suffering that would disappear if the Baptized lived as if they understood and invested in their baptism!
2. Just as water cleanses, so Baptismal water has cleansed us of sin, thus reconciling us to God. How do we extend the flow of this cleansing to others? Do we seek to reconcile people most especially in our words? Or are my words aimed at demonstrating my correctness or, worse, at dividing people from one another?

Then there are a few “water lessons” that might require more time to cultivate:

3. Just as water is a home to many creatures, so our Baptismal water has given us a home in God. Do I believe this? Am I conscious of existing in the world as a unique presence of the living God? Or am “I” all I offer the world?
4. Water is flexible in that it pours into and fills any shape. While remaining itself, it takes on the shape into which it is poured. In the same way, Baptismal water pours divine life into human persons each of whom is absolutely unique. The one divine life given us in Baptism is manifest in an infinite number of unique ways! Do I appreciate God’s humility in permitting me to be myself? Am I conscious of how much God has willed me as a unique reflection of his one life and love to the world?
5. Water can be deadly and, as such, is frightening. In the same way, Baptismal water kills sin (and death). So far so good. However, if I identify with my sins (and death), then in killing sin, Baptismal water seems to be killing ME. Living as Baptismal water in this scenario will only be possible if I really believe that Jesus wants me to rise from the dead. Then, instead of identifying with my sins (“I’m only human.”) I’ll identify with Jesus and his resurrection! I’ll identify with divine LOVE and not human failure.

Only with great difficulty do we permit our Baptism to prevail in life. During this Easter Season, why don’t we ask for the grace *to become what we are!*

Sister Marie Kolbe Zamora, OSF, S.T.D.
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"Sell in May and go away" is a well-known financial-world adage. It is based on the underperformance of some stocks in the "summery" six-month period commencing in May and ending in October, thus making it a season for selling. For us, it is a season of praying for those in finance. Pope Francis gives us this intention: *Let us pray that those in charge of finance will work with governments to regulate the financial sphere and protect citizens from its dangers.*

This call to prayerfully consider the practices of the financial world harmonizes with our ongoing reflection on the sin of racism. Our Bishops tell us that financial systems can have close ties to the ongoing evils of racism. They write in *Open Wide Our Hearts*, "The roots of racism have extended deeply into the soil of our society. Racism can only end if we contend with the policies and institutional barriers that perpetuate and preserve the inequality—economic and social—that we still see all around us. With renewed vigor, we call on the members of the Body of Christ to join others in advocating and promoting policies at all levels that will combat racism and its effects in our civic and social institutions."

So, the leaders of the Church have called us to consider finance, wealth and how we make decisions about these social realities. To begin, here is a story to ponder.

There was a wealthy landowner who lived in the Scottish Highlands. He had a stately mansion overlooking a beautiful valley. But he had no religious belief, he lived alone, possessed by his possessions.

He employed a farm manager, John who was a man of simple faith. With his family John was a regular churchgoer, and the Lord's presence was a reality in his home.

One morning the landowner heard the bell at the door ring and upon going down, found John on the door step. 'What's the matter John?' he asked.'

'Sir,' said John hesitantly, 'last night I had a dream, and in it the Lord told me that the richest man in the valley would die tonight at midnight. I felt you should know'.

The landowner dismissed him, but John's words kept bothering him, so much so that at eleven o'clock he went to the local doctor for a complete check-up. The doctor examined him, pronounced him fit as a fiddle



and said he'd give him another twenty years. Lingered doubt caused him to invite the doctor around. They enjoyed a meal together and eventually when midnight passed and he was still in the land of the living he saw the doctor to the door and then went up the stairs to retire.

No sooner was he in bed when he heard the doorbell ringing. Going down he found a sobbing girl whom he recognized as John's daughter.

'Sir,' she said through her tears, 'Me Mum sent me to tell you that Daddy died at midnight.' The landowner froze as it was suddenly made clear to him who was the richest man in the valley. (*Stories for Preachers* by James A. Feehan)

Thus, as we proceed, we keep in mind that wealth, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder. What is truly of value can vary from one to the next. Let our reflections bear in mind that the Church has given us a wealth of teachings which bear on the accumulation and use of money. Many of these teachings can be found in the area of Catholic Social Principles. Let us see what the Church has to say.

In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis instructs: "Business is a noble vocation, directed to producing wealth and improving our world. It can be a fruitful source of prosperity for the areas in which it operates, especially if it sees the creation of jobs as an essential part of its service to the common good." The Pope's words have those important qualifiers that business or finance is to improve the world and serve the common, rather than the personal good.

It is in this context that Pope Francis says “no to an economy of exclusion and inequality”. In his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, he says: “How can it be that it is not a news item when an elderly homeless person dies of exposure, but it is news when the stock market loses two points? This is a case of exclusion. Can we continue to stand by when food is thrown away while people are starving? This is a case of inequality.”

In the same document, the Holy Father speaks about people’s relation with money, and what happens when one accepts its dominion over oneself. The Pope says: “We have created new idols. The worship of the ancient golden calf (cf. Ex 32:1-35) has returned in a new and ruthless guise in the idolatry of money and the dictatorship of an impersonal economy lacking a truly human purpose.”

As Church, we hold that the economy needs ethics in order to function correctly—not any ethics whatsoever, but an ethics which is people centered. John Paul II explained it this way: “The economy is only one aspect of the whole of human activity. If the production and consumption of goods become the center of life and society's only value, the fault is not so much in the economic system itself as in the fact that the entire socio-cultural system, by ignoring the ethical and religious dimension, has been weakened, and ends by limiting itself to the production of goods and services alone.” One has only to look at a magazine or newspaper, listen to the radio, surf the internet or watch a bit of TV to come to the distinct conclusion that this misguided veneration of “things” and the power to possess them has become an idol. What has become of working for the common good?

Finance should be related to the correct understanding of common good. The Second Vatican Council defined common good as “the sum of those conditions of social life which allow social groups and their members, ready access to their own fulfillment”. Common good is not ‘the greatest good for the greatest number’, because this can allow for the exclusion of individuals or even segments of society. Looking after the common good means making use of the new opportunities for the redistribution of wealth among the different areas of the planet, to the benefit of the underprivileged that until now have been excluded or cast to the sidelines of social and economic progress.

Another of the Church’s social principles involves the preferential option for the poor. It affects the life of each Christian inasmuch as he or she seeks to imitate the life of Christ, but it applies equally to our social responsibilities and hence to our manner of living, and to the logical decisions to be made concerning the ownership and use of goods”. Once again, we return to the idea that our primary aim is not to possess as much wealth and property as we can solely for our own pleasure.

This option is a special hallmark of the Pontificate of Francis who says that, while loving everyone, rich and poor alike, “he is obliged in the name of Christ to remind all that the rich must help, respect and promote the poor.” Pope Francis says that this option “is an ethical imperative essential for effectively attaining the common good.”

At the same time, Catholic Social Teaching, while emphasizing this promotion of the poor, speaks against a culture of dependency. In *Laudato Si’*, Pope Francis says that helping the poor financially “must always be a provisional solution in the face of pressing needs. The broader objective should always be to allow them a dignified life through work.”

Economy and finance, as instruments are inherently good, but can be used badly when those at the helm are motivated by purely selfish ends. Therefore it is not the instrument that must be called to account, but individuals, their moral conscience and their personal and social responsibility.” The role of Christians is to rethink and develop new answers and proposals, inspired by Catholic Social Teaching, and translate them into actions which may be effective in the world of today.

As a Franciscan Community, we give thanks for our Sisters who have gone before us and who continue as stewards of our funds. We are blessed by the ways they have and continue to work for the common good, hold sacred the preferential option for the poor and are ever mindful of the ethics called for as followers of Jesus. Let us pray that all financiers great and small may be as diligent in their service to God’s people.

NOTE: A major reference for this article was *Catholic Social Teaching on Finance and the Common Good*
Joseph Galea-Curmi, Auxiliary Bishop of Malta

NaPro Surgeons Class #13, 2020 - 2021



Well, 13 may be an unlucky number for some folks, but not for Drs. Elizabeth Nordin, Stephanie Veit and Michaela Behrens. Class #13 of OB/Gyns who have done

a year of surgical fellowship with Dr. Hilgers and the Institute clinicians are extremely lucky—I mean extremely blessed—to have studied with the clinical staff of the Saint Paul VI Institute. And I can personally testify how the Institute has been triply blessed by their presence and their eagerness to become technically savvy NaProSurgeons. Upon the completion of their fellowship at the end of July, Dr. Behrens will be joining the Institute clinical staff; Dr. Nordin will be setting up a practice in the Twin Cities and Dr. Veit will be practicing in St. Louis, MO. With their wealth of perfecting all sorts of female surgeries that cooperate with the patient's natural procreative processes, these wonderful women will be sharing the "gold" of their training with prospective patients in their respective localities. Congrats to these marvelous women and five-star surgeons!

—Sister Renee Mirkes

2021 Midwest March for Life

On April 24 Sister Delores Vogt and Sister Sue Ann Hall had a wonderful bus trip to Jeff City (a lot of things are abbreviated here), Jefferson City is the Capitol of Missouri for the 2021 Midwest March for Life. Missouri Right to Life chartered a bus.

We arrived in Jeff City around 10:00 a.m.—about a two-hour drive from St. Louis. There were lots of people on the south lawn of the Capitol and many organizations on the periphery with fliers and free items to pick up.

It had begun at 9:15 with a pre-rally of several speakers. Then at 10:00 there was the blessing of a cross (Everlasting Life printed on it), which led the march around the Capitol for about a mile (half was up hill!). Then all gathered on the south lawn for more speakers. During the 1:00 p.m. a Youth Rally, Sister Delores and Sister Sue Ann went into the Capitol to find Representative Mary Beth Coleman from St. Louis, one of the four couples who bought our home. We surprised her! We just caught her in between sessions. She told us if we came



Sisters Delores, Mary Elizabeth, and Sister Sue Ann

back at 2:00 she would take us into the Chamber. As long as we were not lobbyists we were let in. We listened to what was going on to get a feel of what the Representatives do. In the midst of this Mary Elizabeth went to her microphone and introduced us to the House Floor. We got a standing ovation. Several gentlemen came over and introduced themselves and shook our hand.

By the time we did all this it was time for us to get back on the bus for our return trip. We missed seeing the One Act Play: Viable, about how abortion can and will hurt women.

We were well taken care of by four motherly women one in particular. Even though we brought our lunch, we were treated to a hotdog, chips, cookies and ice cream.

The following afternoon, Jeanne Mancini, president of the National March for Life, prayed outside Planned Parenthood before ringing our doorbell and asking if she could make a Holy Hour in our Chapel.

—Sister Sue Ann Hall

Gift of Hospitality Lived Out



Sister Antonice Diederich



Sister Kateri Cooper



Sister Cyrilla Jackels



Sister Valerie Lemansky

This year's Community Goal – "To Pray with Faith, Listen with Hope and Respond in Love and Trust" has been "taken to heart" by the Sisters living on St. Rita's third floor. Yes! They have a definite advantage living in a community setting of twelve Sisters or sometimes less, however, they never miss a beat on making sure that all are welcome, whether you live or minister there. St. Rita's third floor is a place where each person "feels at home"—including each Sister who comes to visit.

Examples of hospitality include:

- ◇ The Sisters warmly welcome any Sister moving there

to join their Franciscan Family. For example, recently Sister Cyrilla moved to third floor and without a doubt, the Sisters welcomed her with open arms.

- ◇ It is obvious when ministering there that each Sister is concerned about each other's needs at times of prayer, meals, recreation, etc.
- ◇ The Sisters express heartfelt gratitude each day for the lay staff who so graciously care for and help them.

The fact is, all of the Sisters in St. Rita Health Center strive each day to live our Community Goal.

—The St. Rita's Sister Team

Sisters Enjoy Outing at Salt Fork State Park



Cambridge, Ohio—Sisters Carol Juckem, June Smith, Mariadele Jacob, Sharon Paul, and Helen Paul celebrated Mercy Sunday and the Feastday of Sister June Smith by enjoying an afternoon at Salt Fork State Park in Guernsey County. This was the Sisters first outing since the pandemic started.

Salt Fork is the largest state park in Ohio. It encompasses 17,229 acres of land and 2,952 acres of water. There are 148 guestrooms in the lodge and there is an indoor and an outdoor swimming pool. There are 53 cabins fully equipped with modern conveniences. There are many recreational op-

portunities. It has golf, the beach, boating, fishing, archery and 14 miles of hiking trails.

The Sisters enjoyed touring the different places at Salt Fork & also took in the Spring beauty of the flowering trees & bushes. They visited the Gift Shop and enjoyed the many wildlife animals.

On the way home, the Dairy Queen was the next stop. We ordered a blizzard or cone and returned home thanking God for this beautiful Community outing.

—Sister Sharon Paul

Easter Social at the Motherhouse

The Sisters at the Motherhouse were asked to decorate hats and wear them at the Easter afternoon social—a variety of hats and materials were made available. The 2:00 PM social opened with a You-tube reflection on the walk into Emmaus. A snack, an Easter egg hunt, singing and dancing to the Bunny Hop rounded out the most enjoyable event. Before and after the social many of the Sisters visited the Sisters in St. Rita Health Center to show off our hats.

