

# Communigram

FRANCISCAN SISTERS OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY

## Meet Our New Postulant—Michelle Ozuna from Austin Texas

I would like to thank the FSCC Community for being so welcoming. I am eager to visit with you all as my discernment journey permits. It is amazing to be back at the motherhouse, no longer as a visitor but as a postulant. I have been preparing for this transition for 6 months now. I still remember the day I received the call of my acceptance into the postulancy from Sister Julie Ann. It was Tuesday, February 15<sup>th</sup> during the lunch hour: I was seated with my friend and coworkers Maria, Christina, and my godmother, Josephine. In a sense, I had the whole holy family with me.



Just a couple of days earlier Deacon Rey gave the homily at Mass in celebration of St. Valentine. I had my eyes closed while listening to the gospel and at the start of deacon's homily I heard the words "My Valentine". I immediately opened my eyes to have them fixated on the crucifix. It was a welcome ministry weekend so I had a booth set up before and after Mass and would usually be one of the last to leave the church. I had registered a new parishioner before Mass named Mary Teresa (Teri). I saw her visiting with Fr. Johnson after Mass. I walked over to say goodbye and we all started chatting.

Teri was widowed 30 years ago after her husband, a deacon for 30 years, passed away. She asked Father Johnson for a blessing. I moved a little as to not interfere with her blessing and she pulled me closer wrapping her arms around me and said: "No, it is for both of us!" Father began to give the blessing explaining that Teri's valentine was in heaven and then looked over at me and said: "And you, your Valentine is Christ." I did not know it then but Teri would end up being like an adopted grandma over the next six months. Before receiving the blessing from Father Johnson, I was still discerning what I had just heard during the homily. I felt in that moment as if Christ, with a little wink of the eye was saying: "Did you not hear me, you are my valentine!" I was completely elated and had complete trust and confidence of my call to religious life in that moment. To receive the news of my acceptance into the postulancy in just a couple of days felt like Divine Providence.

Over the next six months I left my career with the Attorney General's office in April. In May, I sold

my dream car that I had only had since 2020.

I volunteered on a fulltime basis for my parish (St. Paul's Catholic Church), working specifically on their census project. I also continued my volunteer work at the Our Lady of Schoenstatt shrine as a guardian. My new schedule allowed for more and deeper prayer time. I began to take inventory of my possessions and eventually gave them away or donated them. It was a very gradual and meaningful experience to let go of items so I can more freely enter community life. I made sure to say goodbye to all my different ministry and formation groups as well as friend groups and finally, my family. With each goodbye it was like

I was saying yes to the Lord once again.

On July 29<sup>th</sup> I made my "Covenant of Love" to the Blessed Mother through Schoenstatt. The covenant of love is the heart of the Schoenstatt spirituality. When you make your covenant, you are exchanging your own heart for the heart of the Blessed Mother and becoming an instrument of her capital of grace. It was very meaningful to seal this covenant before I joined the Community. The covenant allows me to live out my vocation more fully to the best of my ability with daily acts of sanctification. I know I am not walking this journey alone and have the Blessed Mother to guide and mold me in the image of her Divine Son.

My parish priest, Father Johnson, gifted me with a beautiful image of the Blessed Mother and Child Jesus and in exchange I gifted him with a sculpture containing Christ crucified with part of the "Our Father" and an image of the Last Supper which was gifted to me on the day of my baptism in 2021 by my godmother. The sculpture will now become a vocation cross; it will be passed around weekly throughout the parish to promote vocations to the priesthood and religious life. The vocation cross will be implemented on the anniversary of Father Johnson's ordination.

I have been blessed to have the support of my very loving parish, as well as my friends and family. I understand there will be challenges but I hope to face them head on and through prayer one day at a time. I feel as though I am in a constant state of transition and growth. I look forward to growing closer to Christ and to the Community with each passing moment.

## Catechists to Incorporate Franciscan Values in Curriculums

Sister Carla Riach had the privilege of participating in a new adventure with other catechists ministering in parishes of the Santa Barbara Province. The Santa Barbara Province Office of Franciscan Ministries asked pastors to invite catechists to gather and brainstorm how to incorporate Franciscan values in our Faith Formation curriculums.

Sister Rachel Sena and Grace Gonzales, a Tohono O'odham minister, accompanied Sister Carla to the Serra Retreat Center in Malibu, CA. July 25-28. They were joined by four other catechists and the facilitators.

First on the agenda was a presentation on St. Francis' perspective on life and God. Then each participant shared about their ministries. Most of us prepared a Power Point ahead of time. The facilitators led us in a walking survey to exemplify the variety and size of parishes, teaching styles, materials, etc. After much discussion about what we would like to develop, we decided to develop a curriculum outline with resources and suggestions for incorporating Franciscan values integrated in Christianity and intercultural realities. Our next task was to look at Franciscan values and decide what we want to emphasize and how to word them.

After developing a tentative outline of areas to address, we



*Chapel at the Serra Retreat Center*

formed two focus groups to meet virtually to continue discussing until we meet again in January at the Franciscan Renewal Center in Scottsdale.

The three of us from the reservation will prepare a process for Baptism Preparation. The process we use now was attractive to the group. The other focus group is working on Family Catechesis.

It is a challenging and exciting adventure. God only knows what will come of it. The process so far was very enriching. The Serra Retreat Center was an experience of great beauty and peace. It is located on a mountain overlooking the ocean. Every free moment I enjoyed exploring the grounds and soaking in God's presence in Creation.

Sister Carla shared the Canticle Fold that Sister Mariella created. Everyone was excited about it and want to get some made.

*—Sister Carla Riach*

## Cardinal Stritch University San Damiano Encounter Rebuilds My Church



Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity were invited to meet 14 young people involved in a San Damiano Encounter at Cardinal Stritch University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Sponsored by the St. Clare Center for Ministry and Leadership, participants in this Immersive Experience explored faith through service, prayer, reflection and community. Campus Minister Gino G. Grivetti extended the invitation and we were blessed to come mid-week.

After sharing the Wednesday evening meal, the group gathered in the St. Francis of Assisi Chapel to ask questions forming a vocation panel. Sister Marie Guadalupe Martinez Lopez and Sister Julie Ann Sheahan were among other Franciscans introduced.



Sister Maria Guadalupe summarized the experience so well: "Going to Cardinal Stritch University to meet the youth of the St. Damiano Encounter was so awesome. It was great to meet other Franciscans and learn about their vocation journeys. Those are powerful witnesses and they encouraged me in my own journey. It was so inspiring to see the youth so eager to listen and serve the Lord. What really hit me is what Citlali said in such simple words that the Catholic Church for her is like family, like Mary covering her with her mantle and the colors of Mexico. Such a beautiful, and yet uncomplicated philosophy! I was happy to share my journey with them but really, I received much more from them. This was such a blessing."



## Sisters Serve at Ohio CYSC Damascus Camp

*Sister Mary Teresa Bettag and Sister Hannah Johnnecheck share on their recent experience serving at CYSC (Catholic Youth Summer Camp) at the Damascus Camp in Centerburg, Ohio.*

*Sister Mary Teresa:* Sister Hannah and I were invited to participate in CYSC at the Damascus Camp in Centerburg, Ohio. We arrived on Tuesday evening and stayed through Friday, the final day. The camp is designed with a daily schedule that includes prayer lab, lake time, activities, Mass, skits, and time for adoration, praise and worship. Sister Hannah was able to take part in the giant swing, the rock wall, and archery tag; while I was able to do bread making, the water obstacle course, blobbing (being launched into a lake off an inflatable), paintball, and the high ropes course.

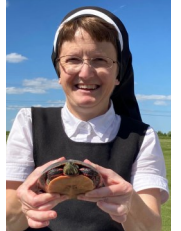
I was so impressed at the way that prayer was at the center of all that we did at Damascus, with the various staff teams alternating times in the chapel to pray for the mission of the camp, and the campers getting coached in prayer during our prayer lab time, and offered the opportunity to en-



counter the Lord in Mass and adoration. It was beautiful to watch it bear fruit in the lives of the campers; and it was a delight for me to also have that time and location to encounter the Lord *and* get to interact with other young religious from a variety of communities. It was a wonderful week.

*Sister Hannah:* This camp was inspired by two families who wanted to help

make the faith more real to the Youth of the Catholic Church. It was named Damascus because it was on the road to Damascus that Saint Paul encountered Christ and his heart was changed. It was a true blessing to be part of this camp. There were about 500 campers and 150 staff. The campers were in Middle and High School. The staff was made up of young adults in their 20's and 30's. I was inspired by the campers' openness to God and the working of the Holy Spirit. I was even more inspired by the young adult staff that was so willing to work extremely hard and be so positive in order to share Jesus Christ with the youth. Our Church is alive and God is still changing hearts!



## Enjoying the Accomplishments of a Former Student



A person never knows what will result from a visit with a former student. Last week Brady Norell came to share his architecture blueprints and projects with me: a staircase and a library building. Then he asked if he could share piano music with the Sisters that he had been learning while at school in Kansas State University.

Brady is the son of Brett and Becky Norell. He began lessons when he was young and the family lived in Milwaukee. After the family moved to Manitowoc, the Norell children took lessons at Holy Family Conservatory. Their first teacher was Sister Antonice Lauer and then Sister Mary Carol Kopecky.

Brady assured me he would continue playing piano, learn new music and continue to share his gift with others. (A major goal for the Conservatory Students.)

—Sister Mary Carol Kopecky

When we checked with Sister Carol Ann there was an opening for an event at the Ariens Auditorium on Sunday, July 31 at 2:00 PM. Brady played themes from movies and musicals which he has been learning over the past years.

He manages to play piano every day especially when he needs a break from classes or studio work. He takes his music to the next building, the Student Union, and plays for the students.

*Fr. Antony Tinker, FHS, and Msgr. Luca Caveada, the secretary to the Apostolic Nunciature in the United States greet Sister Pamela Catherine Peasel after Mass. (Brett Meister | The Catholic Sun)*



We enter a new year of following the Lord Jesus in our uniquely Franciscan way. What is that way? One answer might be *"Our way is just the way of the Gospel."* Just? Here the word *just* would carry the meaning of singularity or simplicity rather than implying we *merely* follow the Gospel. For the purposes of these articles the word *just* also relates to the quality of justice modeled by Jesus. Pope Francis' monthly intentions seem to carry both of these meanings of the word *just* as well. He calls us to keep the Gospel at the uncluttered center of our Christian life while remaining mindful of the many cries for justice among God's people.

Also, June 2022, marked the beginning of a three-year plan initiated by the United States Bishops' Conference with the intent to revive and foster Eucharistic devotion. Thus, this year's articles will aim to tie the Holy Father's intention to this Eucharistic theme through reflection on the "O holy banquet" prayer we pray each morning. This beautiful prayer was composed by St. Thomas Aquinas as part of the liturgy for Corpus Christi. So, let us begin our exploration of these themes.

Pope Francis' intention for September is: *That the death penalty, which attacks the dignity of the human person, may be legally abolished in every country.*

If we value the seamless garment of respect for all life, then we are challenged to examine our willingness to see God's creating fingerprints marking every person regardless of life choices made. On August 2, 2018, the Vatican announced that it had formally changed the official *Catechism of the Catholic Church* on the death penalty, calling capital punishment "an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person" and deeming it "inadmissible" in all cases.

What does this revision mean for us? Pope John Paul II placed his apostolic authority behind the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. John Paul II termed the *Catechism* a "sure norm for teaching the faith" and "a sure and authentic reference text." Therefore, this teaching regard-

ing the death penalty is not one that may be ignored by Catholics.

How might this clear and challenging teaching relate to Eucharist? Let us look at one phrase of the *O sacrum convivium*, or *O holy banquet* prayer.

*...help us to experience the salvation you won for us...* In this part of the prayer we ask God to help us *experience* His salvation—not just cerebrally know it, but *experience* salvation. Already now we can experience the Kingdom and one day we hope to experience salvation in its fullness. But who is worthy of this gift of salvation we hope for? None of us! It is a gift. One given to each and all of God's children who wish to accept it. Does this include those who have sinned greatly? We could ask St. Peter and we would be given the emphatic answer of "Yes! ALL are offered salvation!" This is our belief.



[https://4.bp.blogspot.com/-IIRDTVBngKQ/ToN2KEQ5JcI/AAAAAAAAAD40/0FXlxxqCYic/s1600/death\\_penalty\\_031011-thumb-640xauto-2548.jpg](https://4.bp.blogspot.com/-IIRDTVBngKQ/ToN2KEQ5JcI/AAAAAAAAAD40/0FXlxxqCYic/s1600/death_penalty_031011-thumb-640xauto-2548.jpg)

In a homily for the Feast of Corpus Christi, Pope Francis said, "The Church must be a community with arms wide open, welcoming to all where everyone can enter. The Eucharist is meant to nourish those who are weary and hungry along the way. A Church of the pure and perfect is a room with no place for anyone." This statement is evident in an article written by a Death Row Inmate for *America*

*ca* magazine. You may wish to read it at [I've been on death row for 23 years. Catholic Mass gives me hope in the midst of my suffering. | America Magazine.](#)

So, as we gather each morning to pray and be nourished at the Table, let us bring with us those who dwell on Death Row in so many facilities around the world. Let us pray that they will know conversion of heart. Let us ask that they may one day experience God's salvation meant for them. Let us pray for government leaders that they also may be converted so as to value the lives of all God's children.



## Sisters See Jesus at Arise Milwaukee Family Day

While the U.S. Bishops rebuild Christ's Church through a three-year initiative that aims to inspire, educate, and unite people to know Jesus intimately, the Archdiocese of Milwaukee's Arise Milwaukee is already climbing high in their efforts to accomplish this goal. Arise Milwaukee's recent Family Day at Menomonee Falls Village Park was a real Eucharistic Revival. It offered to those present the wonders of the True Presence of Jesus, healing for souls, and joy in seeing Jesus in each other.

The day was clearly aimed at the young of heart. At first the atmosphere was like that of a carnival with music provided by The Scally Brothers. Face painting, bounce house, balloon animals, snow cones, popcorn, and possible family relays called for action. Also new this year was the rock-climbing wall. There was no fear in the eyes of those who rose to the heights.

Volunteers were caringly wonderful in organizing all details. Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity were blessed to be invited more than once to come for the day. On our arrival, we were asked to respond to a passport activity that encouraged answers to questions that

allowed families to meet Bishop James T. Schuerman, priests, including Father Enrique Hernandez, Arise Milwaukee chaplain, seminarians and religious.

Sister Kathleen Murphy commented: "Summer is the perfect time for the Arise gathering—not just because the warm weather allows for outdoor fun and snow cones, but because it is a season for flowering. One could not miss the flowering of the Church evident at this event. There were so many young families showing their children the primacy of the faith and so many wisdom figures modeling devotion to the Eucharist. What a perfect summer garden of praise!"

One couldn't miss the close encounter with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, a loving gift for all at the close of the day. Each person was given moments to focus eye to eye with Jesus in the monstrance and call on Him in petition, praise and/or adoration. Special to the evening was also an opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation in the beauty of the setting sun. Yes, Jesus was here.



(Photos: AriseMilwaukee)

## Green Bay Diocese Celebrates Sisters' Jubilee Mass

Rejoicing in the theme, *To Light a Fire on the Earth*, the Diocese of Green Bay celebrated the jubilees of the Consecrated Religious Sisters of the diocese on August 14 at St. Bernard's Parish in Green Bay. All of our 2022 Sister Jubilarians were in attendance: Sister Jacqueline Spaniola, 50 years, Sister Paulyn Vanden Hogen and Sister Georgellen Vissers, 60 years, and Sister Kateri Cooper, 75 years. In total, there were 12 Sister jubilarians from throughout the diocese.

The jubilarians were supported in their celebration by the presence of many of our Sisters and Sisters from other congregations ministering in the diocese. The presider for the Mass was Fr. Luke Ferris, Diocesan Vicar for Priests. Concelebrating with him were Fr. Bill O'Brien, Msgr. James Dillenburg and Fr. Placid Stroik, OFM. Our Sisters' Music Outreach group led the music for the Mass.

—Sister Leonette Kochan



Photos by Sister Maria Vinton, SSM



## Summer Events



*Father Johnathan Turba, O. Praem., ordained on June 11<sup>th</sup>, celebrated his 1st Mass at the Abbey on June 12<sup>th</sup>. Among those attending were our Sisters l to r; Elena Gonzales, Kay Klackner, Mardelle Meinholz, Elaine Turba, Anne Turba (Father Johnathan's aunt), Caritas Strodtboff, Pam Biehl, and Helen Marie Paul.*



*Our Temporary Professed Sisters, Sister Mary Teresa Bettag, Sister Concepcion Medina and Sister Maria Guadalupe Martinez Lopez, renewed their vows of poverty, chastity and obedience at the mid-morning all Community Mass on July 8<sup>th</sup>.*



*June 13<sup>th</sup> was the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of St. Anthony Parish in Oconto Falls, Wisconsin. Sister Anne Marie Selinsky, Sister Jan Villemure and Sister Caritas Strodtboff were present to help the parish celebrate and to represent our Community. Our Sisters served there at the school from 1913 until 1987. The school is still doing well.*

*There were 6 priests to concelebrate the 8:30 AM Mass with Father Ken Hendricks, who is the interim pastor now until Fr. Walter Stumpf begins in July. The priests were: Fr. Ken Hendricks, Fr. John Hephner, Fr. Patrick Beno, Fr. Joel Sember, Fr. Bob Karuhn, Fr. Finian Zaucha and Fr. Walter Stumpf. A beautiful choir added to the liturgy and flowers from the parishioners' gardens made the setting so special.*

*—Sister Jan Villemure*



July is Serran time for the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity and other religious and clergy in the Manitowoc area. Not only can one expect a summer barbeque, but some wonderful hospitality from a group of men and women who believe in Gospel Service. The Serrans also invite Roncalli High School students active as Lasallian Youth to serve among us in various table waiting activities. To complete the meal a delicious assortment of desserts including ice cream are enjoyed. A spirited game of bingo follows. On this evening our Sisters make sure they share the winnings around the table so that everyone ends up walking out the door with a prize.



Summer Events



*Sister Carla Riach, Sister Rosalyn Muraski, and Sister Mary Ann Spangers joined in anticipation of the feast of the Assumption at San Xavier Mission Saturday with a procession, celebration of the Eucharist on the hill by the grotto, rosary and delicious Indian tacos. May our Blessed Mother intercede for the needs of the Tobono O' odham people of San Xavier and all of us!*



*July 23— Discernment of Spirits retreatants absorb the beauty of the evening sky with its rainbow after the rain over the Motherhouse.*



*Picking ten flats of strawberries for the Community. Right photo: Front row l to r: Sisters Mary Teresa Bettag, Mary Ann Spangers, and Maria Guadalupe Martinez. Standing: Sisters Concepcion Medina, Janet Rose, Catherine Peter Logan, Adrianna Schouten, and Christine Stoller.*



*Sister Jan and Sister Anne Marie*

*June 14<sup>th</sup> Sisters Jan Villemure and Anne Marie Selinsky visited the St. Bernadette relics exhibit at Lourdes Parish in DePere. We were blessed that of the 26 visitation sites in the North American visit three were close to us in Appleton, DePere, and at the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help. The price of gas determined which place we would visit, closest to our convent.*

*—Sister Jan Villemure*



*Cambridge, Ohio—The Living Word Outdoor Drama is the only live one in Ohio and is one of only two in the U.S.A. It was founded in 1975 by Frank Harvey in Cambridge, Ohio. It brings to life the biblical drama of the Passion of Christ. It goes from June 17 to September 30 this season. Over 100 people from the surrounding communities fill out roles as actors, onstage & behind the scenes.*

*Sisters Sharon Paul, Mariadele Jacobs, Helen Marie Paul, June Smith, and Carol Juckem from St. Benedict's Convent, attended this excellent, spiritual rendition on Friday, August 19, 2022. There were over 230 people who attended.*



# Franciscan Sisters Host St. Mary High School O'Neill, NE Students' Pilgrimage

*Manitowoc, Wisconsin*—Beginning in June, Regina Wiese began communication with the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity to host students from St. Mary High School, O'Neill, Nebraska for a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Good Help Shrine, Champion, Wisconsin. The fieldtrip was supported by monies of the Franciscan Sisters of Colorado Springs, the Saint Joseph Province of an international congregation, the Sisters of Saint Francis of Perpetual Adoration. Regina's husband, Roger Wiese, is the nephew of Franciscan Sister of Christian Charity Sister Thelma Wiese. Roger, Regina and family who visited Sister Thelma more than once at Holy Family Convent in Manitowoc in the past, thought this would be an important leg on the journey.

On arrival August 15, the pilgrims received a tour of our convent. Tuesday morning they shared Eucharist with us in St. Mary Chapel and ate breakfast with us in our cafeteria. By 9 a.m., they were off to the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help. Following the time of prayer, the group took in legendary Lambeau Field.



Returning in time to the Motherhouse for the evening meal, all enjoyed lively conversation. Picture-taking, sharing of our Sisters' hobbies, outdoor games and s-mores continued the relationship-building.



Since there is no ice cream like Wisconsin ice cream, a quick trip to see Bernice the cow at Cedar Crest Ice Cream Parlor in Manitowoc was also initiated. At Wednesday morning's early Mass, our Sisters sang a Blessing of St. Francis for our guests praying that they arrive safely home and that the Lord be with them as they continue their life's journey with faithful, generous hearts.



In our last communication with the pilgrims we learned that they had a flat tire east of Sioux City and were a bit delayed. However, the young people said the only thing they'd change about the trip is more time with the Sisters. We, too, will remember these special visitors with great joy! We learned much from them.

## Reception into the Novitiate—

June 9, 2022



Sister Catherine Peter Logan

*Catherine (Katie) Logan  
From: Colorado Springs, Colorado*



*Sister Natalie Binversie, Community Director: "Catherine, wear this habit and veil, signs of the consecrated life you desire to learn and embrace."*



# Sisters Heritage Walk Clarks Mills to Maple Grove



*Heritage Walk—Hikers and Helpers.*

*Manitowoc, Wisconsin*—On June 23rd some of our Sisters participated in a summer Heritage Walk from Clarks Mills to Maple Grove, Wisconsin. Why Clarks Mills? Why Maple Grove? We desired to capture again the founding spirit of our first Sisters who lived at Clarks Mills and our first postulant, whose family immigrated from Ireland and settled in an Irish community at Maple Grove, Wisconsin.

We shuttled from our Motherhouse to Clarks Mills, the birthplace of our Congregation. We prayed first at the roadside memorial commemorating our Sisters who lived here at this site of our first convent. We were reminded that “our Congregation of Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity is rooted in the call of God to Theresa Gramlich and Rosa Wahl. Their simplicity firmly built on faith in a loving God, their joyful acceptance of poverty, their love for the Church, and their selfless dedication to the service of others are the cornerstones on which our Congregation is built. God leads us under their inspiration to continue to incarnate these gifts through our lives in this Congregation.”

A pilgrimage challenges true endurance. This destination to Maple Grove also proved to be a greater distance than we expected. However, we found strength in the many pilgrims, our Sisters, family, friends, and companions in mission who have endured and reached their own eternal destiny and who walked with us along the way.

An important stop along the way was in the area where the first Catholic Church at Noonan’s Corners was built. Savage Corners and Noonan’s Corners are the same place on earlier maps of that time in history. The Noonan Church was built in 1850 by a Father Joseph Brunner, SJ along what was called the Manitowoc-Menasha Trail. The Manitowoc-Menasha Trail is the modern Highway 10. Ahead of its time, this church served families of mixed nationalities. The first Mass was said in the home of B.S. Lorrigan for Catholics numbering 14 families. It was at this location that our first postulant Mary Doyle’s fami-

ly became acquainted with Theresa Gramlich and Rosa Wahl.

Years later, a certain Fr. Eugene McGinnity who was pastor in 1866 suggested to the Germans attending his parish that they start their own church. This was the origin of Clarks Mills. Fr. Joseph Fessler was assigned in 1866. Father Fessler immediately began organizing a parish for the Irish members. The members of St. Patrick’s, Maple Grove, call it “old St. Patrick” while older people in the Village of Cato called it simply Noonan’s Church. There is no doubt from material obtained through reliable sources that this first building was really dedicated to St. Paul.

As pilgrims we next set our eyes on reaching Maple Grove. As we neared St. Patrick Church, Sister Linda Brandes tolled the bells welcoming us to her own childhood parish, as well as the home of Sister Patricia Doyle (postulant Mary Doyle). Beth Kiel and other members of the Friends of St. Patrick, who exist to preserve the Irish Heritage of the Maple Grove Community Manitowoc County, Wisconsin, were also on hand to greet us and welcome us to this quaint spot.

After sharing lunch with each other, we toured the former convent, church and school marveling at all the priceless photos and keep-sakes stored in this place that tell the story of a proud, yet humble, faith-filled people. It was noted that other relatives of our Sisters were among those highlighted as we moved from room to room and building to building.

One interesting memorial found outside was entitled the “The Hedge School”. This maze was constructed as a reminder of forces that drove early settlers to leave their beloved Ireland and move to a corner of the Wisconsin wilderness to build the community of Maple Grove. In Ireland it was against the law to educate any child of a Roman Catholic family. Some parents hired a traveling teacher who would hold classes in the corner of a field, shielded from view by hedges. The classes would move from field to field daily to escape the eyes of the authorities. If caught, the teacher would be arrested and the parents fined.

Aside from the well-kept cemetery nearby, there were also other trees and restful benches identified in memory of loved ones that created a peaceful atmosphere. Much care and love has gone into creating this spiritual haven of Irish heritage and love for God.

Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity are very grateful that Mary Doyle was courageous enough to join a small band of German immigrants to become a Religious Sister and that her parents were willing to support her call from God. The rest is our history.



**FRANCISCAN SISTERS  
OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY**

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## Throws Out First Pitch at Milwaukee Brewer Game



*Sr. Mary Teresa Bettag threw out the first pitch during the Milwaukee Brewers' Ballpark Day of Faith game on June 26. (Photos by David Bernacchi)*

*Sister reflects on her love of sports, love of the Lord, and her fulfillment as a teacher, coach and Franciscan Sister, currently serving in Arizona. I grew up in a family of five boys and three girls, and being active and outdoors was something we all loved to do together . . . in the fall, football; in the winter, hockey; in the spring or summer it could be baseball, basketball, kickball, foursquare, tennis. It was what we did together as a family.*

And I love that about sports: that it brings people together. That is why I think that sports is a huge opportunity for faith. As Pope John Paul II said, "Sports contribute to the love of life,

teaches sacrifice, respect and responsibility, leading to the full development of every human person." It's no surprise that St. Paul used metaphors of athletes and runners when talking about the Christian life. . . it is one of the great arenas where we can meet people where they are and bring the love and joy of Jesus Christ to them.

That is my mission now that I get to serve as a coach. Currently, I am the head coach of both the cross-country and track & field programs at Yuma Catholic High School. I played a variety of sports in grade school and high school, but cross-country was the sport I most excelled at and was able to continue to run at the collegiate level. I love running, and getting to share that with our student-athletes is definitely a load of fun! But getting to do that as a habited religious sister is something extra special. The number of times athletes, coaches, spectators or the like come up to me wanting to talk, ask questions, or share is too many to count. And I love that! What I'm doing is nothing special, but somehow when people see a Sister out running with the kids in the heat, or cheering them on in a race, or coaching them up at a meet, it strikes different with people. But I really believe that we need to carry Christ OUT of the Church and into *every* sphere of our lives – sports being just one of them.