

Communigram

FRANCISCAN SISTERS OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY

Honor Drive Around Holy Family College/Motherhouse Campus

The closing of Holy Family College has brought many experiences and memories to the forefront of our Sisters' hearts and minds. Sister Jolynn, a resident in our St. Rita Health Care Community, had the great idea of taking a walk around the College in order to take a look at the building as soft demolition is under way.



Sister Jolynn Kohlbeck

So, Sister Elizabeth Benvie and the St. Rita Sister Team did just that—organized a special Honor Drive around Holy Family College/Motherhouse Campus beginning Monday, September 19, 2022. The plan was to

make this “drive” a kind of farewell to our Holy Family College as well as getting our Sisters outside to see the beauty of creation on the Motherhouse campus before the weather gets too cold. About twenty-five Sisters said “I’m interested.”

Kudos to our Sister volunteers who offered to drive. Taking their precious time to escort our Sisters has made all the difference in making it happen. As we close this chapter in our Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity history, we thank our good and loving God for continuing to guide us to “Pray with Faith, Listen with Hope, Respond in Love and Trust.”

—St. Rita Sister Team

Soft Demolition on Holy Family College has started of items to be salvaged



September 9th—Heavy equipment has arrived.



September 19th—Soft demolition has begun.



September 20th—Early morning rainbow.



Sept. 24th—Front entrance open through to patio.



Sept. 25th—Lots of equipment—chapel windows gone—salvage piles of like items.



Postulant Receives Insignia



Manitowoc, Wisconsin—Postulant Michelle Ozuna received the Insignia of St. Francis of Assisi, a symbol of her formal witness of being a Postulant in our Community. In Celano's first book we read that Francis made for himself a tunic showing the image of the tau cross so as to remind himself of his call to imitate Christ. The insignia, the tau with the hand of Jesus covering that of Francis, is to remind Michelle of her call to follow Christ with us. The ceremony was held in St. Mary Chapel in our Motherhouse.

Off to a Great Start



The St. Rita Sisters' Community held their 2022-2023 Community Days on Monday/Tuesday, August 22nd/23rd. On Monday, all gathered in St. Mary's Chapel for prayer, business and inspirational segments of the meeting agenda. The St. Rita Community Spiritual Focus for this coming year is "Watch, Wait and Wonder with Hope."

This years' Monthly Gospel Discussion groups will be formed in St.

Rita's with participation by the St. Rita Sisters and the Sister Team joining them. We look forward to very interesting and spirit-filled discussions.

These Community Days included a celebration on Tuesday of enjoying a favorite ice cream sundae treat in the Cafeteria with each other, Sister Natalie and the General Administration Sisters and our Sisters who help with letter writing. It was lots of fun en-

joying a favorite treat with toppings during a super social including lots of visiting.

Yes, the St. Rita Sisters' Community is looking forward to a blessed year as we "Watch, Wait and Wonder with Hope."

—St. Rita Sister Team

Community Field Trip to Pine Art Center & Gardens



Manitowoc, Wisconsin—As part of our Community Days the Sisters at Chiara Convent took a field trip to the Paine Art Center and Gardens in Oshkosh to see the exhibit called, “The Nature of Light: An Exploration After Dark.” It was truly an awesome experience for all of us and definitely something none of us had ever witnessed before.

Here is a little explanation of what this exhibit was all about:

Light has the power to transform, transport and transfix in remarkable and unexpected ways. To capture this wonder the Paine Art Center commissioned two acclaimed studios, Hyperspace Bypass Construction Zone and Lightswitch, renowned for crafting remarkable and distinctive experiences to create an immersive nighttime exhibition.

The results were creating more than 50 larger than life illuminated sculptures that investigate geometric forms through light, shadow, and perception. This artwork acknowledges diverse cultural influences in

pattern making and design and celebrates the inherent beauty of geometric form and pattern.

The sculptures and lighting installations fill seven rooms on the first floor of the Paine mansion as well as being nestled among three acres of outdoor gardens.

The pictures can't capture how amazing this experience was for us but hopefully it can give you an idea of how creative and unique these sculptures were. There's no doubt that this was an evening to remember and what fun it was to share it together!

For those who might be interested in seeing this exhibit, which runs through the end of October, here's the website you can go to for more information: www.thepaine.org

—Sister Pam Biehl



Sisters Participate in Suicide Awareness Event

Tucson, Arizona—Sisters Carla Riach, Rosalyn Muraski, Marlita Henseler, and Mary Ann Spanjers participated in a Suicide Awareness event September 11th in San Xavier Village. The family of Evana Osequeda organized the event which included making posters of loved one's pictures, a blessing of families who have a loved one who died by suicide, a candle light procession from the Feast House to the hill and back, sharing of stories, music and food.

Evana was the mother of one of our First Communicants this year. She was only 27 years old and leaves behind sev-



eral children. Two of her older sons and a nephew played the big drum throughout the procession. On the way back from the hill a beautiful rainbow appeared. God was assuring all of his loving presence.

—Sister Carla Riach

During this month containing the Feast of St. Francis, Pope Francis brings us an intention that echoes Franciscan faithfulness to the Gospel, zeal in preaching this same Gospel and a strong value of community. The Holy Father's prayer request reads: *For the church; ever faithful to, and courageous in preaching the Gospel, may the church be a community of solidarity, fraternity and welcome, always living in an atmosphere of synodality.*

Synodality... synod... synodal. These are terms that are in the air these days. What do they really mean for us? The Commission on Spirituality Sub-Group: Spirituality for Synodality (of which our Sister Marie Kolbe Zamora is a member) has written a paper which will enlighten us on many topics relating to the synod. They offer thoughts on central themes for a spirituality of synodality, practices that will help to develop a synodal disposition, as well as a reflection on Mary as a model of synodality.

This article states, "Synodality is not a new element of the Church's life and self-understanding. It is constitutive of the Church and has been present in many forms since its beginning. Synodality is a way to express who we are as Christians and who we are becoming together as Church through the work of the Holy Spirit." This concept of synodality as connected with growth as one Body, one Church fits well with our partnering with Eucharistic themes.

St. Thomas Aquinas included the phrase, . . . *May our worship of this sacrament of your body and blood . . .* in his prayer honoring the Eucharist. This part of the prayer brings forward our unwavering belief in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharistic elements. We may also

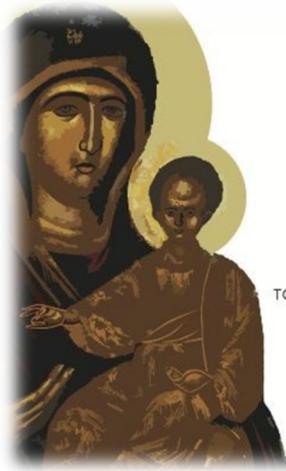
note that Aquinas uses the word *our*. He speaks of our faith community, of the many parts making up the one Body of Christ. We all share this belief in who we receive. This oneness is necessarily a part of a synodal approach to Church.

The paper composed by the Committee on Spirituality includes the following thoughts on Eucharist in their presentation. "Our being-one-in-Christ is nourished

and deepened until it also fills our own existence and relationships. As Saint Augustine says: 'If you, therefore, are Christ's body and members, it is your own mystery that is placed on the Lord's table! It is your own mystery that you are receiving! You are saying, "Amen", to the truth of what you are. Be a member of Christ's body, then, so

that your "Amen" may be true! . . . (The Eucharist) makes us stand at the center of the world and enables us to be unified in our act of blessing God, of receiving the world from God and, at the same time, offering it to God, and, by filling the world with this Eucharist/ thanksgiving, it enables us to transform our lives, that life we receive from the world, into a life in God, into communion.

Pope Francis, in a 2019 address says: *It is not enough to have a synod; you must be a synod. The Church needs intense internal sharing: a living dialogue between the Pastors and between the Pastors and the faithful.* So, let us pray that the Church grows as a welcoming community worshipping Jesus who comes to us in the forms of bread and wine; who comes to us in the Gospel proclaimed; who comes to us in the living synod that is the Church.



TOWARDS A SPIRITUALITY FOR SYNODALITY

Summer with the Tertians



During the month of July Sister Mariadele Jacobs and I directed the Tertian Program for four Sisters. The Tertian Program is a time of renewal for Sisters in our Community who have been perpetually professed for at least five years. Sisters Elena Gonzales, Hannah Johnecheck, Helen Marie Paul and Pamela Catherine Peasel were part of this program which ran from June 20-July 16 and included their annual retreat.

The weekly schedule included time for both study and discussion as well as prayer, visiting, recreation and even a little cooking. There were also presentations on different aspects of religious life by a variety of speakers. Among the speakers were Sister Anne Marie Lom who shared insights about our Franciscan and Community Charisms, Fr. Dave Beaudry who shared his reflections on the Lord's Prayer and Sister Caritas Strodthoff who gave us both a Motherhouse and a "Traveling" Heritage Tour which took us to the new St. Nazianz Historical Museum along with wanderings through Clarks Mills and Manitowoc.

We also read and discussed the book "12 Keys to Spiritual Vitality: Powerful Lessons on Living Agelessly" by Dr.

Richard Johnson Ph.D. Dr Johnson is nationally recognized for his pioneering work in Spiritual Gerontology and maturing adult faith formation. He is also known for coining the term, "spiritual gerontology" to highlight the role of faith in the aging process.

On Saturdays we enjoyed a cookout and bonfire together with the Sisters who have been living at Chiara for the past year and on Sundays we went to see some interesting sights in the area. These Sunday "field trips" took us to Bookworm Gardens in Sheboygan, Whitefish Dunes State Park and Cave Point in Sturgeon Bay along with a couple of trips to the "Cow" and a bit of geocaching in Manitowoc.

The Tertian Program gave all of us an opportunity to share community life together as well as time to reflect on what it means to "grow in wisdom and grace" – even if the Tertians weren't quite ready to think about aging yet!

– Sister Pamela Biehl

Sister Presents at a Conference in Spain

The Rain in Spain Falls Mainly on the Plain—

those mesmerizing words from Professor Higgins' elocution exercise of *My Fair Lady* fame—kept running through my mind on September 15th as I flew from Omaha to Madrid and as I boarded the high-speed train from Madrid to one of Spain's southern cities, Cordoba.

I discovered the phrase has no connection to the realities of Spanish hydrology, by the way. Spain showed me her arid face; no rain—only sun—for the entire week I was there. Let's call that blessing #1.

Blessing #2 was the myriad of angels—human and divine—who encircled me during the entire trip. I kid you not. Every time I thought 'now what am I going to do?' or 'how do I get where I need to go?' there was a human angel right by my side who either spoke English well or spoke it well enough to supply the directions and help I needed. (My Spanish was limited but growing every day, by dint of necessity!) Everyone was so respectful, so very kind. I forgot to tell you that I spoke with Jesus directly before and during the trip, placing the entire enterprise in his hands and he, of course, was the director who brought all these amazing angels to my side.

Blessing #3 was the enriching conference I attended: ICLARS (International Consortium on Law and Religion Studies) CORDOBA 2022. A conference drawing 300-500 legal, judiciary and theological/philosophical participants from around the world to discuss human rights and religious freedom. I was the only consecrated female religious, but there was a Dominican legal professor from Belgium and Franciscan lawyer/priests from Poland. I was honored to present a paper on the right to family planning under the banner of NaProTechnology. Not only was my paper well received, but some European and Egyptian participants recognized NaPro and told me, following the lecture, that they knew of physicians in their area who trained in Omaha at the PPVI Institute. It was simply amazing to see and hear.



Sister Renée Mirkes

Then there's blessing #4: to be in the city of Cordoba, with its immense historical richness—a city where Jews, Muslims and Christians have, from the 10th century forward, learned to live in peace and harmony. Probably the only place in the world where religious freedom and respect amongst the major religious traditions is a living reality. The very reason, in fact, the ICLARS planning committee chose Cordoba for this conference. The city embodies what the conference was highlighting—the prospective beauty and fruitfulness of mutual respect for human rights amongst the various religious traditions.

And, finally, blessing #5: the privilege of participating in the Eucharistic liturgy at Cordoba's Mosque-Cathedral (Mezquita-Catedral). Mass twice daily and Muslim prayer on Fridays. You really have to see and hear the sounds of this magnificent structure to appreciate what I experienced during the Mass. The Mosque is built around the Catholic cathedral and no matter what door you enter you work (and walk) your way through the mosque with its iconic Arabic arches until you reach the very center of the building, the Catholic cathedral. That walk was revelatory. It helped me understand that the RCC church is the fullness of truth and all other Jewish/Muslim traditions are in one real sense moving toward that truth, Jesus Christ. My prayer: that we all may be one in Christ.

Pictures hardly capture the magnificence of this monument, but you won't be disappointed if you go online and discover aspects of its grandeur: <https://mezquita-catedraldecordoba.es>

Photo by Ajay Suresh from New York, NY, USA - Cordoba-5, CC BY 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=79565004>



Labor Day Weekend in the U.P.

Labor Day weekend found the three of us on the road to the U.P. for our community day outing. Sister Jan's sister and her husband were on an extended trip to the east, and graciously offered us their home for home base. We were not there much as the days were filled from 9 till 9 with travel, eating, and sightseeing. Paul Villemure, Sister Jan's brother and his friend Ann were our chauffeurs and tour guides and saw to all our meals.



Saturday began with breakfast at the Big Boy. Yes, they still have a Big Boy in Manistique. We visited Kathy and Cindy who previously owned the Mustard Seed, at their new store called the Bostique. Next on the agenda was a trip to Fayette, Historical State Park and Village. We toured for a couple hours. The harbor was

gorgeous, and the weather beautiful and the buildings educated us on the community of the late 1880's that worked and lived there. We tried to see Big Springs on the way home, but the two hours wait to get on the raft deterred us. Instead, we went to Mass at St. Francis de Sales and then to Paul's home for a visit on the patio and grilled burgers. A trip to the Dairy Kream topped off the day.



Sunday the day began with breakfast at the newly remodeled Dreamland restaurant, now Bacon and Bread. Then we spent the day at Sault St. Marie. First, we toured the Valley Camp ore boat which is now a museum. One highlight was seeing the tugboat from the Edmund Fitzgerald, that Paul lifted into the museum, with a crane. Next, we went through the locks on the Le Voyageur tour boat. That was a first for us. After that we rode up the elevator in the Tower of History, previously called the Tower of Missionaries, one of the tallest buildings in



Michigan. It tells the history of the Chippewa Tribe, church history of the Jesuits and Bishop Baraga. After that



we went back to the Locks viewing platform to watch a 700-foot ocean vessel come through to pick up grain in Lake Superior for the Caribbean. Our Soo time ended with supper at the Antlers restaurant, surrounded by hundreds of taxidermy animals that are displayed there. On returning to Manistique, we stopped at the new ice cream store on US2.

Monday, we began with breakfast at the Cedar Street Café. Then we headed for Munising to take the Picture Rock's boat trip. It was beautiful weather for the trip, so we sat on the top deck. After that we picked up pasties for a U.P. treat for us and to give Paul and Ann for all they did for us these three days. On the way home, we stopped at McDonald's in Menominee where St. Anne Church stood when Sister Jan taught there in 1969. Sister Anne Marie had cousins who lived across the street. A man approached us from Sheboygan, saying he saw us at the breakfast at the Cedar St. Café that morning.



We met many people and saw so much of God's beauty in these places and experienced the generosity of the home away from home and the chauffeuring and meals that we could only say thanks. We are blessed.



—Sister Jan Villemure, Sister Anne Marie Selinsky, and Sister Elena Gonzales

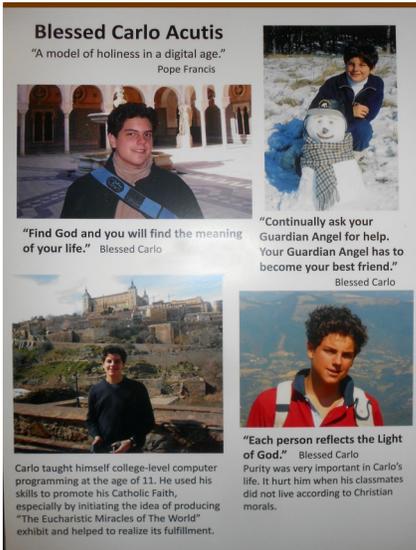


Sister Jessica Zwarra

Sister Jessica Zwarra was among the Consecrated Religious Jubilarians of the Diocese of Orlando.

"I'm very grateful for being called to religious life as a Franciscan sister and I hope to keep spreading Franciscan joy wherever I am serving," said Sister Jessica, reflecting on her 70 years of religious life. "I'm grateful for all the opportunities God has given me. I wish many other young women could find this joy in serving God."

Blessed Carlo Acutis and the Eucharistic Miracles of the World Exhibit



Sister Helen Marie holds the first-class relic of Carlo Acutis designed by Carlo's mother. Pictured with Sister are the hosts of the exhibit, Dr. Bill and Mary Ryckman.



Sisters Mariadele and Carol are viewing the Eucharistic Miracles researched by Carlo Acutis.

A first-class relic of Blessed Carlo Acutis and the Eucharistic Miracles of the World Exhibit was brought to St. Peter & Paul Oratory, Lore City, Ohio on August 20 and 21 by Dr. Bill and Mary Ryckman.

Sisters Helen Marie Paul, Carol Juckem, June Smith, Mariadele Jacobs, and Sha-

ron Paul were among others who viewed this extensive display.

Carlo researched and created a website which lists over 100 Eucharistic Miracles that are translated into 17 languages.

Sister Sharon shares some quotes of Blessed Carlo Acutis:

- ◆ “The only thing we have to ask God for, in prayer, is the desire to be holy.”
- ◆ “The Eucharist is the highway to Heaven.”
- ◆ “All people are born as originals, but many die as photocopies.”

—Sister Sharon Paul