

Communigram

FRANCISCAN SISTERS OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY

Sister Cyrilla Marked 100th Birthday on Easter Sunday

For Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity this was no ordinary Easter Sunday celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. April 9, 2023 marked the 100th birthday of our Sister Cyrilla Jackels. Easter dinner included birthday cake and the traditional birthday tune for a jubilant celebrant. Sister is one known to be ever pleasant and grateful for God's goodness and faithfulness in her life. Before the meal, she was asked to present the gift of bread at the Easter Sunday liturgy. All of the Sisters at the Motherhouse attended this Mass and specially prayed with her.

When she was born in 1923, Sister Cyrilla lived in the country on a side road off of Wisconsin Highway 55 in what was known as "Little Chicago". The town included a dance hall, a tavern, and a supper club about 1/4 of a mile away from the Jackel's 280-acre farm. Sister Cyrilla commented once: "At that time I did not know what "Big Chicago" was like."

The family's parish was St. Mary, Kaukauna. "I attended the new St. Mary School with the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity from kindergarten through 8th grade. I learned much from my teacher, Sister Azarius Engledinger. Then I attended Kaukauna High School."

Sister was born into a large family—10 in all; however, a brother and a set of twins died before Sister was four or five years old. Another sister, Agnes died before Sister Cyrilla entered the convent at age 18. Joy and sorrow were part of life. Her parents' faith kept them together and they trusted in Jesus' promise of resurrection for all their loved ones. The Easter message of hope has always been a source of strength.

How did this centenarian become a Franciscan Sister? Sister Cyrilla recounts, "In school the Sisters asked us to sort papers or other little jobs. Sister Anicetus Groessel did not actually help me to discern my vocation; however, her goodness led me to be one of them."

Sister Cyrilla's many happy memories of teaching included sports. When she was sent to Lima, Peru, baseball was initiated. "Can you imagine—they had never seen a bat and didn't know how to use it. They soon learned what a foul ball, a grounder, and a fly were. They learned just three outs came fast at first." Sister Cyrilla's family life taught her the enjoyment of this past time.

She also spent years serving in the Community's sponsored ministries in Wis-



Sister Cyrilla enjoys a light-hearted moment wearing a festive Easter bonnet to the Community's noon meal on Easter Sunday.

consin and Ohio. Her joyful spirit was ever contagious as she volunteered in many ways doing what needed to be done. Today, she is part of the prayer apostolate remembering daily the needs of St. Francis House of Prayer.

On this Easter Sunday, we thank the Lord for our Sister's gift of life. With her, we pray for young women who are open to the Lord's call to religious life, that they, too, may live long, selfless, joy-filled lives as Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity.

Sisters Attend Institute on Religious Life National Meeting

Sister Natalie Binversie and Sister Mariella Erdmann attended the Institute on Religious Life National Meeting at the University of Saint Mary of the Lake, Mundelein Seminary, Mundelein, IL, April 14-16, 2023. The meeting was exceptional, inspirational and faith-filled. This article can only touch on the talks which were very much in depth. April 14th was a Day for Religious, Priests and Consecrated Persons. The speakers were Father Boniface Hicks, OSB and Sister Elizabeth Beussink, TOR., who spoke on the theme of “Spousal Intimacy with Christ Through the Eucharist.”

Father Boniface explained that Vatican Council II stressed full and active participation by the people in the Eucharist at the Mass. This led to the question, how can we offer Christ’s offering of Himself, Body and Blood to the Father at Mass? We do this by allowing ourselves to be drawn to Christ and then bringing ourselves and all our intentions to the Father, within Christ, at Mass. A little water is mixed with the wine symbolizing the pouring of our humanity into the Divinity of Christ. We unite ourselves to Christ’s sacrifice to the Father and conclude with the AMEN—our total YES.

Sister Elizabeth Beussink shared some of her life experiences as a novice and how she had to grow into intimacy with Christ through the Eucharist. These personal examples of transformation were examples of our own individual journey toward intimacy with Christ through the Eucharist.

The afternoon sessions by these two speakers focused on being with our Lord in silence. It is a movement of the Holy Spirit for Eucharistic Adoration. We lower ourselves in Adoration and Christ raises us up after we bow down before Him. By exposing ourselves in our sinfulness we have our sins released and our guilt removed. We bring our entire lives into relationship with Christ. We come before Christ faithful, free, total and fruitful.

The first speaker for Saturday’s meeting was Father James Mc Curry, OFM Conv., who talked about five Catholic Priests who were “Prisoners of Conscience.” By this he meant they held the Eucharist in such high esteem that they refused to stop being loyal to their Catholic beliefs especially the Eucharist knowing they would be arrested, impris-



Sister Mariella and Sister Natalie (a member of the IRL board) with two Sisters from Poland.

oned and tortured. The examples were very moving.

Kathleen Beckman was the second speaker. She started by saying, “Humanity is longing for love. Jesus in the Eucharist is there to love us. Just let go and surrender to Him.” We should be transformed every time we receive the Eucharist. The Eucharist is Trinitarian. The speaker talked about the life of Blessed Conchita, 1862-1937, and her spirituality. Conchita declared that our desires are infinite and can only be filled in the Eucharist—Father Son and Spirit. We need a revolution of love to save the world today; love that sees the evils around us, but chooses to see good in people caught in addiction, abuse and many other situations.

Another presenter, Sister Alicia Torres, FE, shared on the Eucharist having three aspects: sacrifice, presence, and communion. A Eucharistic life is patterned after the life of Jesus. We are made in the image and likeness of God. The three Divine Persons are always present in each other. Our lives must be sacrifice, presence and communion to others.

Msgr. Swetland, S.T.D. mentioned Karl Rahner saying that, “Christians in the future would either be mystics or nothing.” In other words, we need to see things as God sees them. Each and every one of us is beloved of God; we are chosen and loved at baptism. Young people are looking for unity, love and belonging. We need to help them see that in Christ we are brought back to harmony with God and can be in harmony with one another, if we truly want to be healed. We are asked to take up our cross and follow Jesus in our broken world in order to be grace for others. We are asked to pour out our lives as Christ did for others as God wills.

Sister Mariella Erdmann



Meet Our NaProSurgeons: Class #15

Omaha, Nebraska—I'll be honest. I tell every class of NaProSurgeons they're my favorite class. But this year I really mean it. These two OB/Gyns—just completing their six-month ethics seminar with me and rounding off their 2022-2023 year of surgical fellowship with our NaPro Clinicians—are just marvelous people, personally and professionally. It's been an absolute joy discussing JPPII's Theology of the Body and relevant ethics issues with them. And, the learning process has been a two-way street. They were like thirsty plants

drinking the philosophy/theology in, and I was the beneficiary of their medical expertise. To my delight, they've turned into great armchair philosophers. Dr. Monika Potocki (right) will set up her NaPro surgical practice in New Jersey and Dr. Katie O'Leary (left) will be practicing in Indiana. Please keep both of them in your prayers, since current practice of obstetrics and gynecology is chucked full of pressures to conform to models of healthcare delivery that are morally shy of the mark.

Sister Renée Mirkes

Diocesan Religious Guests of the Norbertines

For Mercy Sunday and the Second Sunday of Easter, the Norbertine Fathers invited the Religious Sisters in the diocese to come and celebrate with them. Our Sisters came from St. Paul's Kaukauna, St. Agnes Green Bay, St. Francis Convent, Chiara Convent and the Motherhouse.

The invitation included an organ performance by internationally renowned Chelsea Chen. The organ performance was open to the public so a full church enjoyed the magnificent talent of Chelsea.

All were invited to share in Solemn

Vespers. The chant and ceremonies were inspiring and prayerful.

A reception followed in the Chapter Hall for the Sisters and the Norbertines. It was a chance to meet friends and make new ones.

A delicious dinner followed in the Abbey dining room. It was the birthday of two of the Norbertines and a Franciscan Sister. Everyone joined in a joyous Happy Birthday.

At the close of the meal, the Blessing of St. Francis was sung by all the Sisters.

Sister Adrianna Schouten

The photos and following quote are from the [St. Norbert Abbey | De Pere WI | Facebook](#) "The Norbertine Community at St. Norbert Abbey was honored to host a diocesan religious gathering yesterday, Divine Mercy Sunday, to celebrate Easter. It was a joy to have so many representatives of religious communities join us for an organ concert, vespers, a social gathering and dinner."



“...were not our hearts burning within us?”

This line from the Gospel story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus is proclaimed each year during the Easter Season. In the past it was traditionally the Gospel on the day after Easter. So, our Community, and particularly our Formation Program, has had the tradition of taking some sort of trip or pilgrimage on the day following Easter in remembrance of those journeying followers of Jesus.

This year Michelle, our Postulant; along with Novice, Sister Catherine Peter; Directress Sister Kathleen Murphy; and Team Members Sister Adrianna Schouten, Sister Sue Ann Hall, Sister Laura Wolf and Sister Carolee Vanness set forth on an excursion through time and through the glorious springtime Wisconsin countryside. They were led on this Heritage Tour by Sister Caritas Strodthoff, our Archivist.

Sister Caritas set the tone before the departure by speaking of how the Emmaus happening has much in common with the faith journey of our Foundresses while also intersecting with our own life adventure. She encouraged us to use our imagination as we left the Motherhouse grounds to picture those first 100 pioneers who followed Rev Ambrose Oswald from Germany to the just-purchased wilderness land in what is now St. Nazianz, Wisconsin.

A short drive brought us to the heart of the village where these travelers began to tame the forests. We met Mr. Robert Domagalski at the St. Nazianz museum. Inside



St. Nazianz Museum

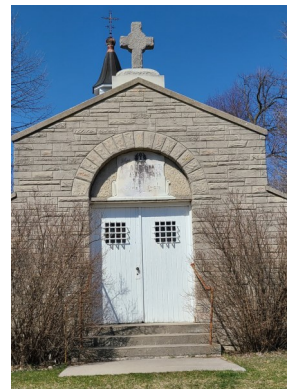
was a true treasure of our past with many artifacts and printed information all of which was enriched by Mr. Domagalski's narrative. His knowledge and love for local history was truly a gift to us.

We moved up the hill to St. Gregory Church where Mrs. Rita Steffen was our next blessing. She graciously opened the church and told us a bit about its past and present. From here we drove across the river to the former Salvatorian Seminary grounds. Here we were able to visit the tomb of Father Oswald as well as several of the graves of familiar Salvatorian priests.

Down the byways we rolled until arriving at Clarks Mills where we stood in front of the memorial marker naming this as the place where our Community was “born”. It was here that Theresa Gramlich first lived when she taught the children in Father Fessler's parish



Michelle and Sister Catherine Peter posed in front of Our Lady of Loretto Chapel, St. Nazianz.



Fr. Oswald's resting place.

Another short drive took us to Manitowoc Rapids. Sister Caritas explained that, though there is no direct connection between this area and our Community's history, it is important since it was the site of the first Catholic Church in Manitowoc County. Maternity of Mary Parish is important to us since Mother Alexia...Pauline Fullmer...was baptized here on December 8, 1859.

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Sisters Participate in Earth Day Clean-up Projects



Sister Leonette Kochan, Sister Julie Ann Sbeaban, Sister Catherine Peter Logan and Postulant Michelle represented the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity in this endeavor.

To celebrate **Earth Day, Franciscans joined together to walk along the Milwaukee Estuary**, deemed an area of

concern due to pollutants and contaminants. They learned about the City's plan to clean up the river and how we can help. The river area is also home to many homeless individuals.

Afterward, a Franciscan Justice Circle was held at St. Martin de Porres parish which included reflections, small group discussions, prayer and lunch. Participants included the Franciscan Action Network, St. Josaphat Secular Franciscan Fraternity, Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity, Capuchin Franciscan Friars, and students from St. Lawrence Seminary and St. Anthony High School.

Various Sisters Participated in clean-up projects on the Motherhouse properties.



Sister Caritas Strodthoff



Sister Theresa Feldkamp



Sisters Greta Peter & Christine Stoller



Sister Adrianna Schouten

Emmaus Heritage Tour

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Visiting our monument at Clarks Mills

From here we drove into Manitowoc and made a brief pause at St. Boniface Church. Here was Father Fessler's second assignment and not surprisingly he brought the little Franciscan Community here to again help with the ministry of education.

Leaving the parish grounds, we noted the house that once was our first hospital. It was named St. Mary's and accommodated 10 patients. Not far down the street, Sister Caritas identified Little Nazareth for us. This was the convent home of the quickly growing Community of Sisters. The building housed their school on the ground floor and the convent on the second story. They soon outgrew this home and moved to our present Motherhouse location.

Our little tour group returned home with our hearts burning within us! The fire was one of thanksgiving for the work God has done and continues to do among us, for the faith and strength of those early believers in Emmaus and in St. Nazianz, and for Sister Caritas who so lovingly shares our history in so many ways.

Sister Kathleen Murphy

Emmaus Outing



Sisters Carol Juckem, Helen Marie Paul, Mariadele Jacobs, and Sharon Paul.

The Franciscan Sisters, from St. Benedict's Convent, Cambridge, Ohio enjoyed a trip to Zanesville and to St. Clairsville for an Emmaus outing. The first trip was to tour Paul's Farm Market and Greenhouses LTD. Sister Helen Marie Paul's sister, Lisa, gave us an extensive tour.

The second trip was to go shopping at St. Clairsville Mall to purchase a blender and a small vacuum cleaner. To our surprise, Boscov was having BIG sales so some of us found other bargains. We ended the day by having a refreshing ice cream treat at our home-town Dairy Queen.

Sister Sharon Paul

JUST Gospel!

By Sister Kathleen Murphy

This month, let us begin with the chosen phrase from Thomas Aquinas' prayer—...*and this bread contained all goodness...* This phrase is easily grasped. The bread of the Eucharist can only contain all goodness since it is Jesus, the Bread of Life. The oft heard phrase, "*You are what you eat.*" Enters in here. If we desire to be what we eat in the Eucharist, then we desire to also be all goodness. This won't miraculously happen as we receive the Bread of Heaven. But it can be the fruit of faithful prayer asking that we grow in goodness. Might this petition be a mantra for after communion? Lord, let me grow in the goodness that you are.

Of course, any goodness that our God authors in us is not for us. It is meant to be shared. Pope Francis reminds us of this reality in the intention which states: *That church movements and groups may rediscover their mission of evangelization each day, placing their own charisms at the service of needs in the world.*

What exactly is meant by *evangelization*? Evangelization is simply understood as sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with others so that they make the decision to follow Him, become His disciple, and join His Church. So, we are to share the Gospel. However, we can't share what we don't have. Do we own the Gospel in a real and personal sense? This only happens through prayerfully developing a personal relationship with Jesus.

So, practically speaking, how do we go about evangelizing? The Reverent Catholic site offers us six strategies.

1. **Pray:** It's important to realize that bringing others to Christ is not about you. It is about fostering a relationship. In this regard, you are not the one who converts anyone.
2. **Ask Questions and Listen:** This requires keeping your comments to yourself, asking questions, and doing a lot of listening. It requires you being a good friend to someone and the ability to not constantly correct people.
3. **The Great Invitation:** After you build trust and a closer friendship with the person you care about, you should invite them to a Catholic event. The obvious one is Holy Mass.
4. **Live the Faith Joyfully:** Joyful living as a follow-

er of Jesus makes you the salt of the earth—one who makes mouths water for the truth and love that only Jesus gives. How do we develop this joy? Be grateful for everything because all is gift from a loving God. You are blessed!

5. **Share Your Personal Story of Faith:** Answer the question "Why are you a Catholic?" That answer must have everything to do with the person of Jesus. Humans do not relate to ideas; we relate to people. We connect with people. Evangelization is about introducing others to the person of Jesus Christ whom you have a relationship with and who changed your life.
6. **Know the Faith:** You cannot possibly know everything but be prepared for the typical questions that get asked to Catholics so you can field them or at least know where to look for the answers.

So, may the Ultimate Goodness given to us each day in the Eucharist be the very one we proclaim as only we can among the People of God!



New Altar Cloth for Motherhouse Easter Vigil

The Catholic Women's Club of St. Agnes Parish in Mingo Junction, Ohio, donated a new altar cloth for St. Mary's Chapel. The ladies wished to honor all the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity, living and deceased, who served in Mingo for 100 years. The parish's appreciation of our Community remains deep and heartfelt.

Sister Marcollette Madden

Helping Migrants at Casa Alitas Drexel Center

Danyelle Khmara from the Arizona Daily Star did a feature, April 7, on the Tucson migrant service at Casa Alitas and the Casa Alitas Drexel Center where Sister Marlita Henseler works Wednesday through Friday each week. Sister reports that they are processing 300+ every day.

A few excerpts from the article follow: Pima County's new migrant services site—run by Pima County and Catholic Community Services—is receiving a larger proportion of people from non-Spanish-speaking countries, following the Biden administration's policy changes. It is currently receiving about 400 to 500 migrants a day. Women and children usually go to Casa Alitas or one of the county's other locations, and single men stay at the new Drexel location.

Up to 85% of single men receiving services, most recently, are from India, says Teresa Cavendish, director of operations for Catholic Community Services. It also is receiving a significant number of migrants from African countries.



Sister Marlita Henseler, left, helps a migrant with his paperwork during the intake process at the new Casa Alitas Drexel Center in the southwest area of Tucson, Ariz. on April 6, 2023.

Besides more languages to navigate, the change in demographics at Casa Alitas and the Drexel Center means there are also added cultural accommodations to account for, especially in the different religious and spiritual practices.

Staff help the migrants with a number of important services, including assessing that they have the proper paperwork from border officials, whether they have a sponsor, and how they plan to arrive at their final destination.

Sisters Invited to Chiara Convent for Donuts



Sunday, April 23

During this season of Easter joy, the Sisters of Chiara Convent invited the Sisters from St. Rita's Health Center, St. Francis Convent, and the Motherhouse for an afternoon social featuring freshly made donuts courtesy of Judy (Sister Anne Turba's sister), Mike, Dan and Sara.



They came from all corners of the map . . .

to complete their training in NaProtechnology and FertilityCare. Physicians and healthcare providers from fourteen U.S. states and just about the same number representing foreign countries (e.g., Portugal, Germany, France, Brazil, Nigeria) were (1) elated to complete the second phase of their educational training in Omaha and (2) eager to teach and apply their medical training in their home clinics/hospitals. During phase one (October) and two (April) of our educational conference, I am a part of a fifteen-member faculty and have the privilege of lecturing on ethics issues throughout the course of the week. The current class was an *absolute joy* making the experience a really substantive exchange. Pictured here are three faculty members--from left to right, first row: Theresa Shortgen (PA), Anne Marie St. Germaine (VT), Alia Keys (MO) end of second row--and two students (right to left)--Pamela Olanie, (OB/Gyn from ID) and Katherine Ross (NP from Green Bay).

Sister Renée Mirkes

**FRANCISCAN SISTERS
OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY**

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ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED

Sister Marie Kolbe will be teaching at the Gregorian University in the Fall regarding a new license in ecumenism

The following are excerpts from an article by Christopher White [New academic program in Rome builds on 'ecumenical spring' of Francis papacy](#) | [National Catholic Reporter \(ncronline.org\)](#)

“When Pope Francis, the archbishop of Canterbury and the moderator of the Church of Scotland made their historic February visit to South Sudan — an effort to illustrate that by putting aside their own differences to beg for peace, that the leaders of South Sudan could put aside their own tribal disputes to work for it — they opened a new chapter in ecumenical relations.

And now, in Rome, a new generation of future leaders is embarking on a different kind of ecumenical journey in the academic world through a novel new program at one of the Eternal City's most prestigious institutions.

During a recent lunch break at Rome's Pontifical Gregorian University in late March . . . German Jesuit Fr. Philipp Renczes present the lineup for next year's courses in the newly launched program in "Comparative Theology of Christian Traditions and Ecumenical Studies."

Renczes, who is the dean of theology at the Gregorian, told me that the program is a response to "reading the signs of

the times" and to the new "ecumenical spring" that has blossomed under the Francis pontificate.

Further, he said, "interdisciplinary research and teaching has become paramount in the academy today," which he said is a natural fit for an ecumenical program seeking to bring together leading academics and luminaries from a range of traditions.

The two-year program, which was launched during the 2022-23 academic year, is not a traditional course in which students listen to one professor lecture throughout the term. Instead, each seminar is co-taught by both a Catholic professor and another professor from a different Christian tradition.

And the lineup for the year ahead is impressive, bringing together some of the top names in Christendom today, among them the former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, Anglican Bishop Steven Croft, Orthodox theologian Tamara Grdzeldze, **Franciscan Sister of Christian Charity Marie Kolbe Zamora** and British theologian Jeremy Morris, to name only a few.”

