

Communigram

FRANCISCAN SISTERS OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY

Meet Our Postulant



Jennifer (Jenn)
Bourque
From Groton,
Connecticut

I've been very blessed to grow up in a vibrant faith filled family and church community at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Fryeburg, Maine. My parents have always been active in our church working with a variety of ministries like Chapel Ministries, RCIA, Pre-Cana, and Youth Ministry both at the parish and diocesan level. Growing up seeing how their stewardship strengthened their faith and family connections truly got me to become more engaged with my faith and relationship with Christ.

As I became more involved with our parish, teaching religious education, working with the acolytes and serving on the Parish Council aided me in learning about stewardship and the beauty that the Catholic Church has to offer us in tradition, culture and faith. During my formative years I was also blessed to have a Bishop who was engaged in having families and young adults understand the importance of the Catholic faith and using your God given gifts to work with others and evangelize our faith. He and the Director of Religious Education established the Maine Diocesan Catholic Council of High School Youth Ministry in which they provided a variety of retreats. One of the retreats that I was connected with was the GIFT retreat as a team leader. In this retreat, high school students had the opportunity to learn about the gifts and talents that God had given them and how to use these gifts in their church and hometown communities

The more involved I became in the variety of church ministries the more I felt a call to evangelization. After graduating from High School, I attended Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio. My goal was to obtain a teaching

degree and join a religious Community or missionary organization and work with children and families. While, at Franciscan University I had the opportunity to meet with a variety of religious Sisters and spend time with them. During these years I also became acquainted with museum work and in my senior year, I felt that God was calling me to investigate this line of work.

After graduation I started working with Colonial Williamsburg and other National Parks; it was during this employment that I had the opportunity to share my faith with others and form strong ecumenical relationships. I also, felt that something was missing, so I went to graduate school and obtained a degree in education and museum studies at New Mexico State University. During my years in school I worked closely with the Newman Center and local parishes

Once, I obtained my degree I continued to work with the National Park Service and forming ecumenical relationships with my colleagues and getting involved in the Catholic churches that I was attending. While being involved in these communities I kept feeling that God was calling me to something deeper and back to my root dream. When I moved to St. Louis for a National Park job at the Gateway Arch I became acquainted with the Secular Franciscan community and started attending their fraternity meetings and going through their formation program. I was also met Sister Delores Vogt and Sister Sue Ann Hall from your Community and spent time with them on my days off. The more time I spent with the Sisters the more I felt like I was somehow "home".

With the intensity of my job at the park, I became distracted from pursuing this calling. I left St. Louis and moved to Connecticut to work with the Navy at their Submarine Museum. While being employed with the Navy I had the opportunity to attend daily adoration and speak with a Spiritual Director, Sister Ann Marie Lom, who solidified that God was calling me into a deeper relationship with him. With her assistance I filled out the application for the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity and a year later I am here part of your Community.

JUST Gospel!

By Sister Kathleen Murphy

Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God” (Phil 4:6-7).

The Catechism reminds us that, *every need can become the object of petition* (No. 2633). We should not be afraid to approach God to entrust him with our needs. Pope Francis leads us in tapping into prayers of petition that not only express needs of the Church and the world, but also reflect our faith in our God who provides. There is a story that paints a word-picture of this reality in faith. It goes like this.

A poorly dressed woman walked into a grocery store. She approached the owner humbly, asking if she might get a few groceries on credit, for her husband was very ill and they had seven children to feed. The grocer scoffed and asked her to leave.

Persistently she begged, ‘Please, sir! I will pay just as soon as I can.’ The owner refused. A customer overheard and offered to cover the cost for whatever she needed. Reluctantly the grocer agreed and asked for the woman’s list. ‘Put your grocery list on the scales and whatever your grocery list weighs, I will give you that amount in groceries,’ the owner slyly promised.

Bowing her head, the woman silently reached into her purse, took out a piece of paper and scribbled something on it. She then gently laid the paper on the scale.

The scale went down and stayed down. The waiting customer smiled as the befuddled grocer added more and more items on the other side of the scale. It would not balance, so he continued to put still more groceries on until the scale would hold no more.

The grocer stood there in utter disgust. Finally, he grabbed the piece of paper from the scales and saw not a grocery list, but a prayer, which said: ‘Dear Lord, you know my needs and I am leaving this in your hands.’

Receiving her groceries gratefully the woman left while the other customer handed a fifty-dollar bill to the grocer saying; ‘Only God knows the weight of a prayer.’

So, as we unite ourselves with the Holy Father in prayer each day and each month, let us also be a bridge that joins the many needs of our world with our generous God.

This month’s intention reads, *Let us pray for those people on the margins of society in subhuman living conditions, that they may not be neglected by institutions and never be cast out.*

Many of Pope Francis’ intentions, like this one, relate directly to the area of social justice. Attention to and the care of the marginalized is certainly relative to life in a healthy society and also calls us to weigh the demands of justice which should apply equally to all. Yet, as the story above illustrates, social justice and particularly care of those in need also relates directly to our life of prayer.

Perhaps we are not on the front lines of actively caring for the poor and neglected, yet we still bear responsibility to do what our capabilities allow. We can seek out information to keep our minds informed as to the plight of those living in subhuman conditions, those on the margins. We can seek information about organizations whose mission is to gather in such poor ones and tend to their lack. We can bring the fruit of our explorations into our conversations in Community and beyond. We need not preach, but we can inspire and enlighten.

Resources that are frequently endorsed for information on the marginalized and Church response to them include Catholic Relief Services and Catholic Campaign for Human Development. These continue to be excellent places to seek information. As we continue participating in the synodal process, you may also wish to check this link: [Three Ways to Listen on the Margins.pdf \(usccb.org\)](https://www.usccb.org/three-ways-to-listen-on-the-margins)

Herein you will find a discussion of three questions to consider. 1.) Ask “who is not around the table”? Whose voice is not present or might be left out? 2.) How can we go out to such groups to ensure their participation in the living Church? 3.) What are some groups that we can partner with in reaching out to those that are forgotten? In the same vein, what are groups that I can support by my prayer?

Let us close with a promise to reflect on the words of Pope Francis in a homily from February, 2015: *There are two ways of thinking and of having faith: we can fear to lose the saved and we can want to save the lost. Even today it can happen that we stand at the crossroads of these two ways of thinking.*

Let us stand at that intersection and pray that the saved will serve and the lost will rejoice in the invitation to be heard.

Summer Celebrations

New Novice

Postulant Michelle Ozuna from Austin Texas was received into the Novitiate on June 13th. She received the name: Sister Michelle Marie



Our 50th and 60th Jubilarians

celebrated with Community and family guests present on June 25th.



Sister Katherine Klackner celebrated her Golden Jubilee of Consecrated Life.



These Sisters Celebrated their Diamond Jubilee, 60 years of Consecrated Life. Standing left to right: Sister Nancy Kinate, Sister Janet Rose, Sister Michael Ann O'Donnell, Sister Anne Marie Selinsky, Sister Patricia Linszen and Sister Mary Lou Loonsfoot (Seated)

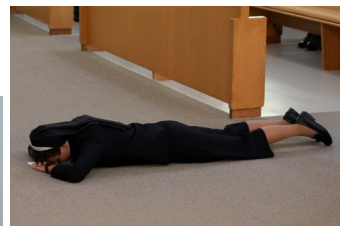
Vow Renewal

Left photo: On July 7th, Sister Maria Guadalupe Martinez Lopez and Sister Concepción Medina renewed their temporary vows. Below: Sister Concepción signs her vow card in the presence of Sister Natalie Binversie and Fr. Gerald Prusakowski, OFM while Sister Maria Guadalupe waits.



Profession of Perpetual Vows

Sister Mary Teresa Bettag professed perpetual vows on July 16th.



Sister Mary Teresa shared: July 16th was overwhelming! As I prayed that morning, I was just overwhelmed by the fact that the Lord called ME! As guests started arriving, I was overwhelmed all over again at the show of love and support from all kinds of family and friends – even some from Yuma who traveled all the way to our Motherhouse in Wisconsin to be present for the occasion. As big of a moment as it was, it wasn't scary or difficult to come to the decision, because when I look back on my life it's always been Him."



Sister Carol Ann Gambsky offered the following tribute at the retirement party:

Sister Mary Carol Kopecky, believe it or not, has taught music for 65 years! Of those 65 years, Sister devoted 24 years of service at Holy Family Conservatory of Music. Her desire, since she was a little girl, was to be a music teacher and help other people love music as much as she did. Her enthusiasm about all aspects of music is contagious and she imparts this zeal for music to anyone who knows her.

I first met Sister Mary Carol in 1979 when I was a freshman at Silver Lake College. She was one of my instruc-

Sister Mary Carol Retires After Teaching Music for 65 yrs.

tors for several music classes and for the Humanities course that was team taught by her and two other fine arts instructors.

At the very beginning, from my interactions with Sister Mary Carol, I knew she was a very special person who cared about each and every student and took exceptional interest in them academically and personally and helped her students grow to their fullest potential.

Over the years Sister Mary Carol guided, taught and mentored many music students in Wisconsin, Michigan and California. She did this with thorough preparation, research, high expectations while offering generous encouragement to her students. Her passion for music has never faded and her dedication to serve is deeply appreciated by her students and their families.

Holy Family Conservatory has been especially blessed to have Sister Mary Carol teach and serve for 24 years. She taught all ages of students and

many different instruments; piano, percussion, flute, saxophone, trumpet, trombone and probably more! One unique ability of Sister Mary Carol is the assistance and guidance given to her high school students as they consider their plans after graduation. Some chose music careers and she went above and beyond the call of duty to help them prepare for college as a music major. Other students received advice about their career path whether it was to go to college or enter the work force.

Sister Mary Carol definitely deserves a change of pace after serving with endless energy, passion and love for music for the betterment of all of her students. Sister Mary Carol will be missed by everyone at Holy Family Conservatory! Your friendliness and conversations with all of the students and families will be missed by all. Thank you for everything you have done. Words cannot begin to express all of the gratitude for who you are and what you have done for the Conservatory.

Sisters Visit Catholic Ecology Center *Laudato Si* Project

They share some reflections on this unique *Laudato Si* ministry project.

Be praised, my Lord, for all corners of the Catholic Ecology Center! We had a wonderful visit that featured the perfect balance of learning, exploring, playing and praying. The staff at the Ecology Center has done a phenomenal job of blending faith and science and evidence of this blending shows itself at every turn

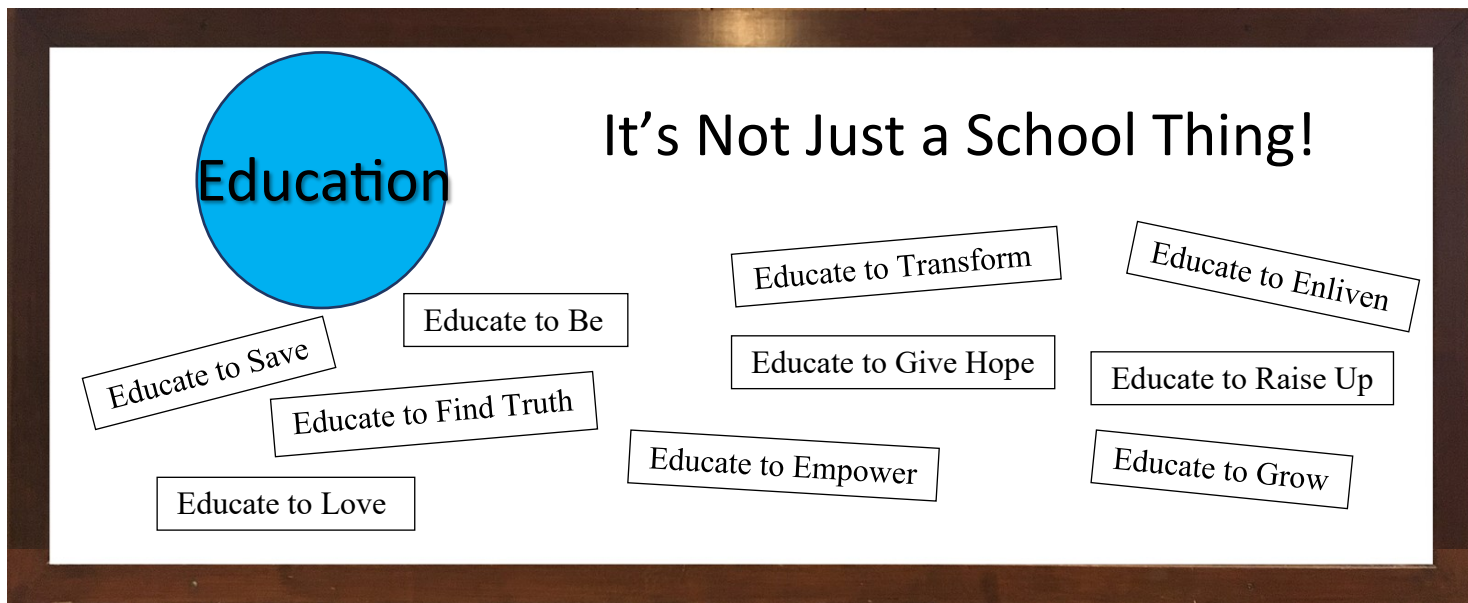
without being oppressive. Although I don't want to spend a lot of time contemplating the owl's fresh frozen mouse entrees, I will spend time re-playing our wonderful day at this inspiring spot of beauty and wisdom!
-Sister Kathleen

Visiting the Catholic Ecology Center (CEC) was such a beautiful and holy

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Sister Adrianna Schouten, Sister Carolee Vanness, Sister Kathleen Murphy, Postulant Michelle Ozuna, Sister Laura Wolf, Sister Catherine Peter Logan and Sister Sue Ann Hall visited the Catholic Ecology Center, Neosho, Wisconsin on Saturday, June 3rd.



2023 Education Meeting July 6, 2023 Declaration on Christian Education

Eighty Sisters participated in the Education Meeting this summer. The tables in the cafeteria were arranged for groups of 8. Prior to the meeting the Sisters were given a copy of the *Declaration on Christian Education* from Vatican II. There were also study guide questions shared with the Sisters as they prepared for the meeting. The diagram above represents the bulletin board that Sister Mariella Erdmann made and hung in the cafeteria that day.

The meeting began with prayer followed by welcoming remarks from Sister Natalie Binversie. Each participant received a paper with statistics about Catholic Schools over the past 100 years. In 1920 there were more Catholic Schools and students than today! Sister Jane Kinata spent a few minutes explaining the differences among the three types of documents that flowed out of Vatican II. Since the document chosen for the meeting is classified as a Declaration, that means it contains the principles or beliefs of the Church on that topic. In other words, it is like the outline and not the final paper.

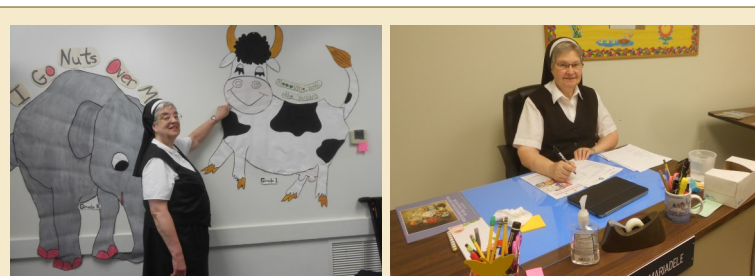
The *Declaration on Christian Education* lists 12 principles that define the Catholic Church's belief for education. There would not have been time to discuss all twelve of the principles so three were chosen for the afternoon. They were: #1 – The Meaning of the Universal Right to an Education; #3 – The Authors of Education; and #6 – The Duties and Rights of Parents. The discussion to the first principle was

summarized by completing the expression “Educate to –.” Each group's response was attached to the bulletin board. This activity led to very animated discussions on the other two points. Time did not allow us to hear the summaries from each group's discussion. A collation of these discussions was sent out to the whole Community.

Another very pertinent question was discussed that afternoon. Where are the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity relative to education today? The collation paper includes the responses from the discussion groups. There are many and varied ways we continue to impact education. We do much for education outside the traditional school setting.

Remember Education is “Not Just a School Thing!”

Sister Jane Kinata



Cambridge, Ohio—St. Benedict's School—Sister Carol Juckem, the music teacher, is putting up animals for each grade. Motivational activities that will be added throughout the school year. Sister Mariadele Jacobs, primary Religion teacher, is preparing materials and decorating bulletin boards that will impact the students for the first quarter.

Our Sisters at Tucson Steubenville West Conference

Sister Martha Mary Carpenter and Sister Pamela Catherine Peasel witnessed at the Steubenville West Conference held in Tucson, Arizona. We share Sister Martha's reflections on the weekend.

What a SPIRIT-FILLED experience.

This was a weekend of GROWTH for all: Our teenagers experienced an 'expanded' view of the Church and saw hundreds and hundreds of their peers ***enthusiastically*** living, owning, sharing and celebrating the basic facts of our faith: that ***GOD LOVES US***, and ***in His LOVE, HE FORGIVES US***, and finally that ***HE IS ALWAYS WITH US***, He will never leave us alone!

Our teens were 'shocked' at the number of young people who came up to us and would always say, "We have never seen REAL Sisters before!"

We were delighted to see our teens ranging from 13-17... soaking it all in, joining in activities, singing and praying with the crowd and getting out of their comfort zones and getting to know other people!!

On ***Friday, July 14th, the Feast of St. Kateri Tekakwitha***, 15 teenagers from all corners of the [Gila River] Reservation, three Franciscan Friars (a Deacon, Novice, Postulant), our 'vocation director' and bus driver, Fabian Terry and his assistant, Waylon Hooke and the two of us [Sister Martha Mary and Sister Pamela Catherine] headed down to Tucson for the Steubenville-West Conference...attended by over 1800 teenagers from throughout the United States—even Hawaii!

The Conference was JESUS-filled and therefore JOYFUL! Every moment of the Conference was organized and accounted for and the kids were exposed and taught various prayer forms, sang their hearts out, celebrated the presence of God, and got to know one another.

Saturday, July 15th-The Feast of St. Bonaventure...The theme of the Conference was ***REFUGE...GOD IS OUR REFUGE!*** The keynote speaker, main Mass celebrant, leader of nightly Adoration was ***Fr. Mike Schmitz!*** He was inspiring, motivating, challenging, delightful, and lots of fun.

Of the almost 2000 people present, there were only ***3 Sisters***...the two of us and ***Sister Mary Patrick from Nigeria*** who is missioned in a city school in New Mexico. Be-



cause of this, we were stopped many times by young people who have never seen a REAL Sister. We were asked many questions, and several young ladies even asked 'how to become a Sister' and told us that they really wanted to be a Sister.

Many asked to take pictures with us, we were interviewed often etc. Our teens were 'shocked' at the number of young people who came up to us and engage in conversation or prayer or ask us to pray for them.

On the last day, Sunday, July 16th, toward the end of Mass, Fr. Mike asked ALL the Sisters to come to the stage...and we were seated at the very back of the conference center....so Fr. Mike teased us a lot on the way up to the stage.

Upon our arrival on the stage, Fr. Mike introduced us and gave a beautiful vocation talk that had people in tears... then the Bishop of Tucson spoke of vocations and thanked us for our vocation and our service to the Church.

Fr. Mike then asked all the young ladies who wanted to be Sisters....***and over 100 young ladies came forward in front of the stage...and some were crying happy tears.*** Fr. Mike and the Bishop prayed over them and asked all present to remember these beautiful young ladies in their prayers that they would have the courage to nurture their vocation and follow Jesus more closely.

Musicians Attend International Kodaly Symposium

Sister Lorna Zemke and Sister Carol Ann Gambsky had the privilege to attend the International Kodaly Symposium (IKS) held at Colburn Music School in Los Angeles, California July 31-August 4, 2023. The symposium days were filled with inspiring keynote speeches, pedagogy, dancing, singing, informative breakout sessions, panel presentations and many excellent concerts. It was an amazing experience to meet and interact with musicians from all over the world to learn, share and grow as persons and as educators.

“The (IKS) Symposium is a biennial international event, serving as a platform to educate, engage, support and foster connections for aspiring and experienced music educators, ethnomusicologists and musicians internationally. This Symposium celebrates 50 years of support for the International Kodály Society, which is active in 34 countries and has Af-

filiated National Organizations in 16 countries. The theme for the 2023 Symposium is ‘Golden Anniversary: Connecting Humanity Through Music’”. (from IKS website)

Sister Lorna was a Golden Honoree during the opening ceremonies. She was honored for having served on the planning committee of the first International Kodaly Symposium held in 1973. She travelled to Hungary for the planning meetings and attended the 1973 Symposium which was held in Oakland CA.

On the fourth day of the 2023 Symposium Sister Lorna was one of the Round Table Speakers on a panel entitled "Pioneers of the Kodaly Movement". The other panelists were Dr. Hongky Cho (south Korea), Judith Johnson (Australia), Judith Neszlenyi (Hungary), Susanna Saw (Malaysia) as moderator.

Sister Carol Ann Gambsky



‘Grumpy in Greccio Play’ for Greccio 800th Anniversary



An 800th anniversary play ‘*Grumpy in Greccio*’ written by Sister Kathleen Murphy was performed at our Motherhouse for a Christmas in July celebration.

The year was 1223. It was a time that many Europeans enjoyed watching miracle plays, which helped people appreciate Bible stories in new ways. St. Francis had an idea. Inspired by his own pilgrimage to Bethlehem, he wanted to help the small Italian village of Greccio appreciate the absolute humility of Christ’s birth using torchlight, live animals and a manger filled with hay. He also knew they needed an attitude adjustment. St. Francis obtained the pope’s permission to create the first living Nativity and got help from wise elder Lord John. Open your heart to believable characters and a contagious Christmas spirit of faith, hope and love possible each day.

Summer Events



Sacred Heart Church in Champion, Michigan celebrated its 150th anniversary on Sunday, June 25, 2023. Bishop John Doerfler was the main celebrant for the Mass with participants filling nearly every pew. After the dinner, Sister Margey Schmelzle, pastoral coordinator gave a short talk that was met with a standing ovation from all present.

Photos from: The U.P. Catholic | Marquette MI | Facebook

Congratulations and God's blessings upon Sister Margey and all the people of Sacred Heart Parish.



In July, Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity were invited to the Arise Milwaukee Family Day at Menomonee Falls Village Park. With live music from the Scally Brothers, kid-friendly activities, Ideal Magic Show with Caleb Hyatt and more, this entertaining day of faith was a blessed event for many families.

Here's more on our perceptions from this year's Arise Milwaukee Family Day. Sister Michelle Marie: "It was a blessing and joy to attend the Arise Milwaukee Family Day festivities. It was a chance to celebrate the strength of families in a thriving and faith-filled community. The sparks of curiosity expressed in the faces of the many children that approached us to know more about us as Reli-

Celebrating God's Blessing Gift

On Tuesday, August 1st at their 10:30 am Mass, the St. Rita Sisters and Sister Team "stepped up to the plate" to share their genuine "attitude of gratitude" for God's Blessing Gift. And that GIFT is Sister Karen Suhr, who has been ministering for the past 23 years in St. Rita's; Sister's new mission is joining the St. Francis Convent Community.

Sister Karen has been a "homerun pro" for many years, generously embracing the many duties and responsibilities in St. Rita. May Sister's gift of a special prayer calendar enable her to continue her dedicated service to God's people. The PS on Sister Karen's gift says: "Be sure to come back and visit us when you can. We love you!"



St. Rita Sister Team Members



Our five Sisters serving in the West Point, Nebraska Community are: (front row) Sister Joy Rose, Director of Mission, Sister Elizabeth Ann Miller, Serving at Guardian Angels Central Catholic School, Sister Louise Hembrecht, Assistant Director of Mission, (back row) Sister Concepción Medina, Registered Nurse serving at Franciscan Healthcare and Sister Patricia Linszen, Sponsor Presence Representative at Franciscan Healthcare and St. Joseph Elder Services.

Still Bearing Fruit

The Good Samaritan School of Nursing closed in 1975 after flourishing for 70 years. Since its closing, the Nurses' Alumni have gathered every year for updates, fellowship and a meal. At this year's gathering (48 years after the School closed!) 79 nurses were present! They came from as far away as Texas. The oldest one present was 91, and they still keep in contact with a 101-year-old and a 102-year-old nurse. They still sponsor a blanket drive every year for the poor, this year they collected over 300 blankets. The wonderful work of our sisters in the past at the School of Nursing is STILL bearing fruit after all these years! The relationships these nurses have forged with each other are strong and built on their bond of faith. A number of them mentioned that, at the Good Sam School, they learned the ART of nursing as well as the SCIENCE of nursing. They are so grateful for their well-rounded education! They have already started planning with gusto for a special gathering in 2 years which will be the 50th anniversary of the closing of the School of Nursing. It was a joy for us to experience the fruit of our sisters' work even after all these many years! And it was a clarion call for us to continue sowing seeds today whose fruits will hopefully continue to blossom for many years to come.

Sister Maureen Anne, Sister Kay, Sister Bernadette



gious Sisters was both endearing and inspiring. It was evident that Christ was the center for all in attendance and their faith was truly lived out in a familial way. Through our participation with families in play and prayer and through the time spent with parents in conversation we were helping to build the body of the church. The day of family concluded in the best possible way, with Christ present in the Holy Eucharist for Adoration with opportunity for prayer services and the sacrament of reconciliation. I

appreciate all the work the Arise team put into making the event such a fruitful experience for all.”

Sister Elena Gonzales: I had enjoyable time visiting and sharing my Franciscan life with young Catholic families.”

Sister Catherine Peter Logan: “ARISE MILWAUKEE FAMILY DAY 2023 was a wonderful experience. It was delightful to share in faith as we interacted with



Sister Dolores Herrmann with tomatoes from her garden.



July 4th flag raising.

Picking strawberries (above) and beans (below).



Our music group played for a number of parishes this summer. Here they are at Sacred Heart church in Appleton, Wisconsin.



Sisters Visit Catholic Ecology Center *Laudato Si* Project

Continued from p.4.

experience. Being fully immersed in God's creation could only leave you in a spirit of gratitude and awe for God's creation. I commend the CEC staff and volunteers for their amazing stewardship of God's creation and their fruitful ministry of education and community.

A favorite part for me was praying at the stations of the cross which were very well situated away from the main thoroughfare. Their location helped me to stay in a prayerful and meditative state. It was very meaningful to pray at the stations of the cross surrounded by the lush, green and tranquil landscape because I enjoy praying while immersed in nature.

Learning how honey bee hives operate through the indoor hive exhibit in the Kateri room left me in a state of awe.

The hive is shielded by plexiglass which gives you a great view of the live bee hive. You can watch the "queen" bee make her rounds. Outside, you can see the tunneled entrance and exit of the hive guarded by the "worker" bees. The enormity of the bee colony's honey operation is impressive.

Between the smells of the native plants and flowers in the butterfly garden to the many sounds of the song birds who call CEC home, it was invigorating to see nature at its best, as God intended it. The center does a great job joyously incorporating science and nature with a focus on community and education.

-*Sister Michelle Marie*

The visit to the Catholic Ecology Center was a true gift to see how faith and nature work together in so many ways. One

unique experience was to see a live bee hive (behind glass). We even saw the queen bee. The care, concern and future planning for native plants, flowers for butterflies and even a natural playground was great. Even played the wooden xylophone. A blessed day.

-*Sister Adrianna*

The Catholic Ecology Center is an oasis that brings together faith and science led by a wonderful staff. You see and hear the beauty of God's creation as you explore the grounds. Native flowers that invite in the butterflies, water full of life and creatures, and a natural play area with an earth friendly musical instrument. This and so much to explore and learn for all ages. What a wonderful way to spend the day with community and I look forward to going back again.

-*Sister Catherine Peter*