

Communigram

FRANCISCAN SISTERS OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY

Christmas Traditions Holy Family Convent



Two photos from the Heritage Room decorations - some of the many nativity sets and an old fashioned Christmas tree.

Sisters Serve on InCourage Board

InCourage, formerly called Manitowoc County Domestic Violence Center, has the following Mission Statement: to provide shelter, crisis intervention, and supportive services for survivors of domestic and sexual abuse and their families, with a commitment to safety, respect and promoting self-determination. The name InCourage recognizes the courage it takes for women who suffer from violence or abuse to step out from their present situation and seek a better life for themselves and their families.

The shelter and offices are located on Reed Avenue in Manitowoc. InCourage offers a 24-hour, 7 days a week, crisis line, a shelter home for women and their children, counseling services, support groups, financial, legal and medical advocacy.

Sister Theresa Feldkamp served on the Board for the past nine years. The Community was approached at that time if any Sisters might be interested and she agreed to serve. Sister Theresa has enjoyed serving on the Board with a variety of people from various backgrounds who are committed to the mission of InCourage. Being a board member involves monthly board meetings and committee meetings as well as helping with various fundraisers. The fundraisers, along with donations and grants, provide the financial support to continue the services that InCourage provides. Our Religious Community donates to InCourage when we are able to tithe. We also participate in their annual fundraiser, Domestic Chef, by purchasing a table for the event.



Sister Theresa, past member, and Sister Joellen, newly elected member, of the InCourage Board.

Sister Theresa was asked, as her term came to an end, if any other Sister might be interested in serving. She approached Sister Joellen Kohlmann who was very interested and willing to continue to support this very worthy cause. Sister Joellen's term will begin in January of 2024. May God continue to bless her and all those who are willing to support the many needs in the Manitowoc community and beyond.

Sister Theresa Feldkamp

New Pastor Installed



Cambridge, Ohio—Fr. Nicholas Ginnetti was installed as the new Pastor of Christ Our Light Parish by Bishop Paul Bradley on Sunday, December 3, 2023. The Mass was held at St. Peter and Paul Oratory in Lore City, Ohio—Fr. Nicholas' home parish. Fr. Nicholas' mother, Christine, played the organ and led the music.

Sister Sharon Paul

Christmas Party at the Convent



Green Bay, Wisconsin—Sister Elena (in red with Santa hat) Gonzales' 3rd grade class from Holy Family School enjoyed a Christmas Party in St. Agnes Convent. Sister Anne Marie Selinsky and Sister Jan Villemure helped to host the event.



Sisters Janet Rose, Ann Mary Hart and Mary Beth Kornely serving at Immaculate Conception School, Yuma, Arizona, are lined up to be part of the Yuma Electric Parade. The Sisters rode in a limousine this year. Quite a distinctive honor.

Below is the float from Immaculate Conception Catholic School.



Franciscan Sisters Ride in Yuma Electric Parade

Yuma, Arizona—This year the Dorothy Young Electric Light Parade celebrated its 20th year. The parade is one of the most anticipated events in the Desert Southwest and each year roughly 40,000 people line up along Yuma's North End to catch a glimpse of the lit-up floats, bands, and cars that coast along the parade route. Each year the parade ends in Historic Downtown Yuma, where spectators claim their spots hours before the event even starts.

This year's theme was "Travel Forward" paying homage to the Desert Southwest's Past, Present, and Future. Parade organizers looked to our citizens to pay tribute to our community's past, whether it be its ties to the Gold Rush, Aviation, or even the history of the Colorado River. They, also, asked participants to share the incredible things Yuma has to offer in the here and now and where they think Yuma will be in a hundred years. [Dorothy Young Memorial Electric Light Parade - Welcome To Yuma, Arizona - On The River's Edge \(visitumayuma.com\)](http://www.visitumayuma.com)

The Sisters helped to light up the night with the Christmas spirit on this 800th anniversary year of St. Francis of Assisi beginning the live Nativity Scene in Greccio, Italy. May the Lord bless our world with light and peace.

Sharing what Life as a Sister is Like



Sister Julie Ann Sheahan and Sister Carol Seidl visited grades 3-6 at Holy Trinity Catholic School in Casco, Wisconsin on November 28th.

Gathering with St. Gregory, St. Nazianz Religious Education families

As we celebrate the Feast of the Holy Family, Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity recall memories of a gathering with St. Gregory, St. Nazianz Religious Education families for prayer, dinner and social. As part of the prayer, our Sisters brought an image of Our Lady of Guadalupe that we received in December 2019 from Agustin Lopez Ramirez, uncle of Sister Maria Guadalupe Martinez Lopez. The gift had been blessed by St. John Paul II.

As part of the prayer service, the families were invited to bring a rose (flower) to place before the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe. The flowers were later placed in church near Mary's altar and some given to The Crossing of Manitowoc County, a non-profit, Christian-based organization with a mission to provide emotional, educational, material, and spiritual support to clients, empowering them to become strong and resilient families. Other donated items from the organization's wish list accompanied the flowers.



Tohono O'odham Carolers Sing at San Xavier Convent

Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity at San Xavier Mission Convent were in for a recent evening treat. Some of the Tohono O'odham children and others accompanying them surprised us and rang the front door to sing Christmas carols. The timing was just perfect. We were not only ready to hear their beautiful singing but were able to share our homemade Christmas cookies with the group. Needless to say, Jesus was born in our hearts through the kindness of these visitors.



Sisters Rosalyn Muraski, Marlita Henseler, Mary Ann Spanjers and Carla Riach enjoyed being surprised by the carolers.

Invited to Speak at Serra Club



Sister Caritas Marie Le Claire was invited by a lady who attends daily Mass at Our Lady of Champion to give a vocation talk for the Green Bay Serra Club on December 15th at the Allouez Grill.

The Gathering started with Mass celebrated by Fr. Getchel followed by a light luncheon and Christmas carols. Sister shared her vocation story with questions and answers after. Enjoying the conversation, the Serrans started talking about the Sisters that they knew from our Community or had in school. It was a delightful time.



St. Nick Visited St. Peter Indian Mission



St. Peter Indian Mission, Bapchule, Arizona—St. Nick who is played by Brother Kevin comes out every year and dresses as St. Nick, Bishop of Myra. He shares with the children the story of St. Nick and how we derive Santa from St. Nicholas. Many who do not know him mistake him as an actual bishop coming to visit the children. His costume is very authentic. The students also receive a candy cane as he shares with them the Christian meaning behind this Christmas candy.

Sister Pamela Catherine Peasel

JUST Gospel!

By Sister Kathleen Murphy

Welcome to January, the month named after the Roman God, Janus. This deity was held as the god of beginnings, gates, transitions, time, and passages. He is usually depicted with two faces—one looking forward and the other backward. We join Pope Francis in praying for his monthly intention. This month we pray **that the Holy Spirit may help us to recognize the gift of different charisms within the Christian community and to discover the richness of different traditions and rituals in the Catholic Church.** What does that have to do with Janus? Perhaps we can deepen the Holy Father's intention as we treasure our rituals and traditions with the richness they hold, while reflecting on the newness that charisms bring to the Church.

A lesson from Makar Sankrant might kindle our reflections. Mother is flying a kite. Her son is watching her carefully. After some time Son says "Mom. Because of the string the kite is not able to go any higher." Hearing this, the mother smiles and breaks the string. The kite goes higher and then shortly after that, it falls to the ground. The child is very dejected. The mother calmly explains: "Son, in life we reach a certain level and then we feel that there are certain things that are not letting us grow any further like home, family, or culture. We feel we want to be free from those strings. But, remember, Son, these are the very things that will help us stay stable at great heights. If we try to break away from those strings our condition will be similar to the kite. We'll fall down soon. Stay connected while flying high."

Our Catholic traditions and rituals are those strings which keep us stable and connected as members of the Body of Christ. These surely include all the signs, symbols and rites of our Sacraments, but perhaps Pope Francis is also calling us to discover the richness found in the cultural and domestic traditions practiced in families around the world as well as those little rituals of faith that we may practice daily, but fail to value.

Carolyn Humphreys OCDS writes: "As Catholics, we have a spiritual treasure trove of solemn and simple rituals. The most important and most needed rituals are in the sacraments. They renew our spiritual energy, and give

meaning to who we are as Catholics.

"Simple rituals are a part of daily life. The sign of the Cross and everyday prayers help keep order in our routines by giving clarity, and rhythm to who we are as Catholics. Indeed, we need constant reminders of what we believe, in order to grow in our love for God and to avoid the influence of anything that opposes God's love."

THE GIFT OF DIFFERENT CHARISMS AND RITUALS IN THE CHURCH

A ritual or tradition that requires much explanation loses something in the verbiage. The most powerful experiences of ritual are those with few words, but with reverence and significance in the action. Fr. Aaron Johanneck, S.T.L. states: "In the Mass there are processions and gestures, incense, bows and genuflections, the carrying of the Book of the Gospel, the kissing of the altar. We may not know all of the history or meaning behind these rituals, but when they are celebrated with due honor and prayerfulness, they communicate much to us even without being explained. In fact, too many explanations can greatly reduce the beauty and power of a ritual. Ritual with no, or minimal explanation helps us to understand and experience that we are entering into something that is bigger than us; something that is important and worthy of our veneration. So, how greatly should we reverence the rituals of the Sacred Liturgy!"

This month might be a wonderful time to reflect upon and share some of the cultural rituals and traditions that we have experienced in our families, neighborhoods and parishes over the years. What a gift is this richness in our communities!

While rejoicing in this giftedness we do well to turn to Pope Francis' call to recognize the vast variety of charisms within the Christian community. Though we en-

counter the word *charism* frequently, what exactly is the meaning of *charism*?

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* tells us, “‘Charism’ is the Greek word for ‘favor’ or ‘gratuitous gift’. Charisms, are special abilities given to all Christians by the Holy Spirit to give them power to represent Christ. All charisms ought to be exercised in the service of God.”

So, unlike our natural gifts, charisms, are given to us to give away, and are one of the ways God continues to enter the world through our cooperation. They always benefit other people and draw them closer to God.

In order to grow in our recognition of charisms present in ourselves or others, it may be helpful to know three signposts of a charism:

1. An unmistakable inner experience of peace, energy and joy when you are using the gift. It energizes you!
2. Unusually effective and successful results in what you’re trying to accomplish
3. Other people’s direct or indirect recognition of the gift’s presence

Perhaps you may not have been aware of the fact that there are three primary lists of gifts in the New Testament (Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4), and St. Thomas Aquinas lists about 14 charisms in his *Summa*. We have no reason to believe that these lists are meant to be exhaustive. Twenty-five of the identified supernatural Christian Charisms are: Administration, Celibacy, Craftsmanship, Discernment of Spirits, Encouragement, Evangelism,

Faith, Giving, Healing, Helps, Hospitality, Intercessory Prayer, Knowledge, Leadership, Mercy, Missionary, Music, Pastoring, Prophecy, Service, Teaching, Voluntary Poverty, Wisdom, Writing, Public Tongues and the Interpretation of tongues.

Knowing more about charisms in general can help us to be more attuned to their presence in the family of God’s children. Awareness should lead us to praise and thanksgiving to a God who gifts the Church and the world in such a prodigal manner.

Since January is also a month to be mindful of the Gift of Life and of Christian Unity, we can tie the awareness of these to the enlivening and uniting power of charisms present among us.

School Christmas Program

Cambridge, Ohio—On December 19, 2023 St. Benedict School students, presented their Christmas Pageant, “Angels’ Message in My Soul.”

Sister Carol Juckem wrote the presentation and included in the pageant are some of her original songs a long with some traditional ones. The band directed by Sister Carol and Janine Bock, performed before the pageant.

The acting and readings centered on the message from the Archangels and the choirs of angels who announced the true meaning of Christmas: “Jesus is born for us, who is Messiah and Lord.” “Glory to God in the highest and on earth PEACE to those on whom His favor rests.”

Sister Sharon Paul



Sr. Carol created these angels that were on each side of the stage up high!





Rome, Italy—Sister Marie Kolbe Zamora shared these close-up photos of the 2023 Vatican Nativity Scene. The scene pays special tribute to the origins of the beloved tradition on the 800-year anniversary of Francis of Assisi's Greccio enactment of the Birth of Jesus.

