

# Perspectives

Spring 2016 Volume 31 Number One

A Publication of the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration





*“It is my burning desire that, during this Jubilee, the Christian people may reflect on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. It will be a way to reawaken our conscience, too often grown dull in the face of poverty. And let us enter more deeply into the heart of the Gospel where the poor have a special experience of God’s mercy.”*

– Pope Francis, April 11, 2015

“I somehow find, as I sit silently with a patient, I see them as a unique face of God.” These words, shared by Marcella Anibas, FSPA, are written inside this issue. And they reflect the theme we present to you: mercy.

Pope Francis has invited us to live out this Extraordinary Year of Mercy, sharing his desire to “make evident that the church’s mission is to be a witness of compassion.” And it is stories of compassion that we feature.

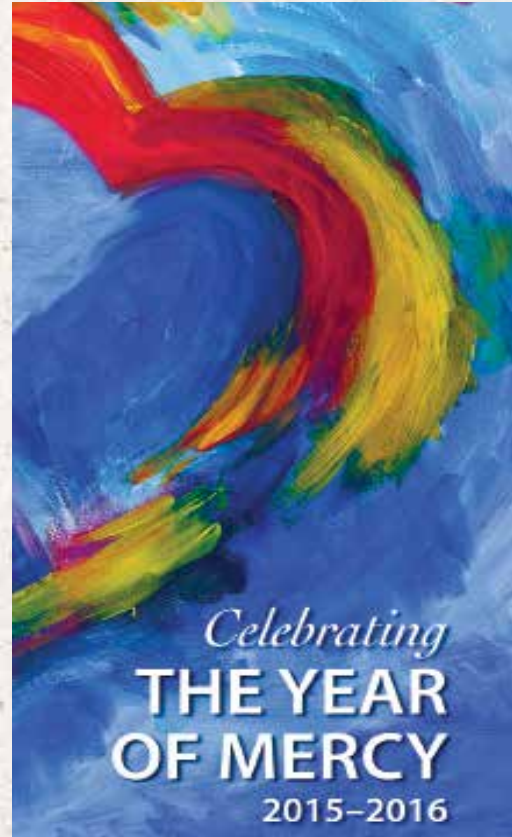
Compassion offered to the dying. Sister Marcella, who ministers to hospice patients in St. Paul, Minnesota, experiences deep connections (even with those who can’t speak) that allow her to see each person she cares for as “unique; loved by God.”

Compassion offered to kids whose parents are incarcerated. Through this story we learn how playing a simple game of Candy Land serves as an act of mercy by affiliate Dee Paqué.

And we find compassion in community. Affiliate Joyce Heil explains why the simple question “how can we live a mercy-filled life” pulled her group together to find opportunities to reach out and share what they have.

We look to St. Francis of Assisi as a continual source of spiritual inspiration and Joan Weisenbeck, FSPA, shares her perspective on how his teachings manifest in the spiritual works of mercy. She shares that “Christ’s abundant mercy is always waiting for us ... we extend that mercy to others ... as did St. Francis.”

According to Pope Francis, “A little bit of mercy makes the world less cold and more just.” Go and put mercy into motion. Together, let’s make the world more just.



*This banner, celebrating the Year of Mercy, can be seen on the campus of Viterbo University in La Crosse, Wisconsin.*

Artwork courtesy of Viterbo University

**Perspectives represents the spirit and values shared by the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration.**

President:

Sister Karen Lueck

Vice President:

Sister Helen Elsbernd

Mission Councilors:

Sister Catherine Kaiser

Sister Karen Kappell

Sister Julie Tydrich

*Cover artwork by Maryam Gosling, FSPA*



# Mercy and comfort

## Learning from the living and the dying: mercy in visiting the sick

“**I** somehow find, as I sit silently with a patient,” she says, “I see them as a unique face of God.”

She is Marcella Anibas, a Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration who began to recognize distinctive expressions of the Spirit 60 years ago in the elementary school children she taught; in the urban inner-city youth she influenced; in the parishioners she educated and counseled; in the Franciscan Sisters and affiliates she served; in the spirituality seekers she inspired; and now in the hospice patients she prays with, gives presence to, shares compassion with, learns from.

Throughout her ministerial years, those leading her to the people she now volunteers to care for in their time of dying, “I sensed a call to healing ministry.” Sister Marcella has been especially attuned to such soothing since she served the Franciscan Center for Wholistic Living (later known as The Well) in St. Paul, Minnesota, directing programs, providing spiritual direction and serving as interim director for one year. “I recognized that my ministry there required good listening skills in what is said and unsaid.” These abilities, she believes, serve her and her hospice patients—some who have permanently lost verbal communication—well. “I have learned deep spiritual connection



Marcella Anibas, FSPA

is possible and caring, loving presence and soul connections readily replace words. I have formed deep relationships,” she says, “with persons who have never spoken a word to me.”

What Sister Marcella does hear loud and clear, as she cares for two to three hospice patients at a time (in the St. Paul area), is that what goes unsaid speaks to her “of FSPA’s mission to manifest God’s love to those who come into our path. It’s a way of living perpetual adoration, a prayer of contemplative silence.” What resonates with her too is “mutuality in good ministry: I receive more than I give.”

Full presence in moments with the dying can convey clarity. “I simply know what to say, whether or not to be still, what I might offer, how to support loved ones.” And what she learns about the lives of her patients—stories, faith, traditions—allows her to see each person as

“unique; loved by God.” Her heart, says Sister Marcella, holds many experiences with “patients I’ve been privileged to serve,” such as her time with a man who had frontotemporal (front lobe) dementia, an illness that robbed him of vocal function. His wife shared her husband’s love of sports and the outdoors, and so Sister Marcella would take him out

in his wheelchair. She’d pause when she saw birds or squirrels; plants or flowers she thought he’d enjoy. One day the two of them came upon a



Sister Marcella Anibas, right, who’s served as an educator and spiritual leader, now also heeds a call to healing. She’s received training in hospice and palliative care as well as vigil (11th Hour) and bereavement care.

Photo courtesy of Marcella Anibas, FSPA

rose bush “and he said very clearly ‘pretty flower.’” Although she never heard another word from the sports fan, the nature enthusiast, “it’s a moment I’ll hold in my memory forever.” She also carries these remembrances to the families at visitations and funerals, with herself in a journal that honors “each experience for me—what the patient taught me.” And through her journeys with these women and men, “I have learned much about both living and dying.”

Growing through the intrinsic act of compassion for those breathing among and passing beyond us: it’s a ministry for Sister Marcella, a corporal work of humanity, and a call to action from Pope Francis in this—the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy. As FSPA, “we have been making efforts to build and uphold authentic relationships,” affirms Sister Marcella. She reignites a challenge: to “move beyond your comfort zone”; an act of courage she’s found within herself. And Sister Marcella also extends to us an invitation: “to search our hearts to see who we are called to be ... God’s loving care and mercy for others.” ■





# Mercy and compassion

## Time to heal, hope and forgive: affiliate imparts compassion to families through jail ministry

“As long as you can play Candy Land,” assures FSPA affiliate Dee Paqué, “you’re good to go.” And Dee should know. She’s played the game many times—drawn countless cards advancing her two blue spaces, bogging her down in Molasses Swamp, inviting her to visit Queen Frostine. And her opponents aren’t your average board game sharks. They are young children hanging out in the waiting room at the La Crosse County Jail while their caregivers visit with a loved one incarcerated there.

Playing games and reading books with these kids is just one of two jail ministries within La Crosse, Wisconsin’s corrections system to which Dee, an FSPA affiliate, devotes herself. For the past six years, she and FSPA affiliate Sheila Garrity have also been facilitating a program known as Story Book. Moms incarcerated read children’s books out loud while Dee makes an audio recording. She captures these maternal voices on CDs and mails them (along with the book) to the kids at home. They can listen to mom’s soothing voice when they climb into bed at night, when they need her arms around them, when they’re sad and struggle to live without her.

Such loss of presence is perhaps more pronounced for the adult confined—conceivably, as a parent, unidentified. “It’s easy to forget that some of the women in jail are moms.” They are mothers, says Dee, whose unfortunate choices make intangible the love and care they have for their sons and daughters; women who may, she laments, be repeat offenders; and parents who, she hopes, will use their second stay behind bars for reflection. Some moms start reading a story, recorder on, but can’t speak their way through overpowering sobs. “I always think,” reflects Dee, “that’s a good sign.” Others, she shares, are shut

In this time to heal, hope and forgive, Dee carries recognition of doing so in many ways in the La Crosse community. She was honored with Women’s Fund of Greater La Crosse’s Roberta Zurn Outstanding Women in Leadership Award in 2015 for contributions through her volunteer work with organizations promoting awareness and education for causes like human trafficking and mental health.



*“Right now the prison population in La Crosse, Wisconsin, is high,” says FSPA affiliate Dee Paqué, “and there is room for the program to grow.” Donations of books and games are needed, as are volunteers. For more information contact her at [dpaque@centurytel.net](mailto:dpaque@centurytel.net).*

Photo courtesy of Dee Paqué

down. Yet most “can’t thank us enough.”

There one day for Story Book, Dee and Sheila ran into a group of kids causing a ruckus during visitation time. “We instantly tuned in to what a stressful situation it was” for the caregiver straining to connect with an inmate through such chaos. Dee was inspired to initiate a new program designed to change the scenario: to engage the children and dial down distraction for the adults. Not long after, FSPA entered the picture with donations of a table and chairs. Through other contributions shelves filled up with books and games. The best gift of all for these families? “We’ve had 10 volunteers since the beginning” who give time, attention and enthusiasm to the kids who gobble it up like candy. “Moms can visit and not stress out. It works,” she smiles, “beautifully.”

That sentiment brings Dee full circle back to Candy Land. She’s playing, this time, with two little girls leaning in close across the table to take in the excitement and enjoyment she’s so thrilled to share with them. There are books to borrow until next time; attention that hopefully tides over to give caregivers a reprieve at home. “You get the feeling” you’ve passed on to the family “pearls of wisdom they might understand someday.”

And what will Dee have to hold when these children grow up? When their moms return home? From the beginning of each game played to the end of every book read, Dee’s found joy. “I love it,” she says. “I just love it.” ■



# 2016 Jubilarians

## Diamond - 75 Years

Sisters Theodora Feulner,  
Rose Therese McMullin,  
Louise Rahe



## Diamond - 70 Years

Sisters Cecilienne Goetz,  
Rita Rathburn,  
Pauline Wittry



## Diamond - 60 Years

Sisters Marcella Anibas,  
Dorothy Dunbar, Laurice  
Heybl, Catherine Kaiser,  
Ladonna Kassmeyer,  
Antona Schedlo, Dorothy  
Schneider



## Golden - 50 Years

Sisters Rose Elsbernd,  
Jean Michael Treba,  
Lisa Zmuda



## Silver - 25 Years

Sisters Marcia Baumert,  
Eileen Shaw



Historic photos courtesy of  
FSPA Archives/Heritage

## Silver - 25 Years

Affiliates:

Karen Dosemagen  
Vicky Freybler  
Della Lundquist  
Bernadette Murray





*Pope Francis wisely reminds us of a special gift from God: mercy. He encourages us to take this year to set aside time to be mindful of how we can show mercy toward others as God showers mercy on us.*

*How might you respond to this invitation?*

*For more about the Year of Mercy, visit [www.fspa.org](http://www.fspa.org)*

*Select Year of Mercy under news/events*



## *Empathy*

*"This Year of Mercy is an invitation for us to rediscover the infinite mercy of God, that is, to hear again God's message of love and compassion and to allow it to transform our life. There is such a need for mercy in our lives and in our world! We are called to be instruments of God's love and mercy to a world so in need of this good news. I believe that the experience of mercy can change the world and our own lives."*

*– Katie Mitchell, FSPA*

## *Goodness*

*"Pope Francis' invitation to a Year of Mercy calls me to reach out to those whom some of our presidential candidates judge with harshness rather than mercy, such as Muslims and the homeless."*

*– Vince Hatt, affiliate*



## *Love*





**G  
r  
a  
c  
e**

*To me a Year of Mercy means a deeper relationship with the Lord, a deeper reconciliation with my faith, beliefs and values, and through actions bring grace to the most needed.*

– Lola Burge, affiliate



**C  
o  
m  
p  
a  
s  
s  
i  
o  
n**

*"For me, the invitation of Pope Francis to be people of mercy calls me to honesty and integrity within myself and a response of respect and compassion toward others by my words and actions."*

– Jean Moore, FSPA



**K  
i  
n  
d  
n  
e  
s  
s**



**C  
a  
r  
i  
n  
g**

*"Mercy is an open-hearted response to individuals, and events in life. I believe that every person/being is a manifestation of God and I will continue my inner work of striving to respond with an open heart toward all beings. To do this I must be aware of my thoughts and living in the moment."*

– Delmarie Gibney, FSPA

**U  
n  
d  
e  
r  
s  
t  
a  
n  
d  
i  
n  
g**

- Call to personal and communal ecological conversion. Strong mandate to RISK BOLDLY
- Acknowledge root of poverty - ecological devastation and inequity
- Encouraged to make ALL decisions and practices regarding land and buildings with ecological priority
- Work to understand and practice principles of the universe - interiority, diversity and Communion
- Trust for future - secure care of Earth over financial security

– Nancy Hoffman, FSPA







# My Perspective

## From God, to St. Francis and Pope Francis: living mercy

by Joan Weisenbeck, FSPA

In naming himself Francis, our pope proclaimed Francis of Assisi his patron. There is probably no saint as radical as Francis when it comes to living the Gospel. So whenever we are inspired to take into our hearts the message of the Gospel we are following Christ, imitating Francis, showing the face of Jesus Christ to others. By such example, do Franciscans have an edge? Maybe, maybe not. But we all need someone to inspire us, to invite us into more than what or who we are as God did for St. Francis; as it is manifested in the spiritual works of mercy; as it is proclaimed by Pope Francis in this, the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy.

### To admonish the sinner ...

Francis speaks of mercy in a letter to a minister when he says "... however much he could have sinned, who, after he has looked into your eyes, would ever depart without

---

*"There are often opportunities to recognize struggle and, in response, inspire with a composed promise of prayer, a spiritual thought."*

Joan Weisenbeck, FSPA

---

your mercy ... And if he were not looking for mercy, you would ask if he wants mercy." Can today's leadership—in society, religious communities, parishes—offer such an example of extravagant mercy to someone who has made a serious mistake? Can that person be welcomed back into the group without judgment or condemnation? If so, it would be a radical gesture of love and forgiveness.

### To counsel the doubtful ...

Doubt is not unusual. Does God really care about me? If so, then why do I suffer? Do I make a difference? Often, we can only live into these difficult questions for answers.

But "where there is doubt," wrote St. Francis in *Prayer for Peace*, there is "faith." Doubt invites Christians to respond to these inner wonderings by looking to our beliefs and place our trust—our faith—in others to help us. Francis did. He asked Clare and Sylvester of Assisi to pray earnestly to God to resolve his doubt about living in prayer or traveling and preaching. Both came to the same conclusion: Francis should preach the divine good. Immediately, he set about doing so.

### To instruct the ignorant ...

St. Francis preached the Gospel ardently—to people of all ages, to the poorest and most learned, even to the animals—as a messenger of God. It is said his word was like "a blazing fire, reaching the deepest parts of the heart and filling the souls of all with wonder."

Most of us do not preach in the formal sense of the word yet all of us



*"Christ's abundant mercy is always waiting for us, to heal, comfort and console us," writes Sister Joan Weisenbeck. "We extend that mercy to others through our own works, as did St. Francis."*

Icon by Joan Weisenbeck, FSPA

can preach with our lives by sharing the gift of who we are—our faith, our listening to others, our spiritual advice to the troubled, our ministry to the needy in the spirit of acceptance and joy, and our treatment of the poor with kindness.

### To comfort the afflicted ...

One of Francis' companions was tempted in the Spirit, felt oppressed in his struggle and longed to receive encouraging words from God through the writings of Francis. His conflict disappeared immediately when Francis responded with his composition *The Praises of God*.

Have you ever received a letter from someone during a difficult time in your own life? Did it provide comfort and joy, even after the passage of time? There are often opportunities to recognize struggle and,

Continued on page 13



# Spirit of Ministry

## Together, we live mercy-filled lives

by Joyce Heil, affiliate

This is a special year in the life of the Catholic Church. Pope Francis has invited us into this Jubilee Year of Mercy, but what does this Year of Mercy look like in our daily lives?

We tend to think of mercy as compassion or sympathy, but the word actually has a much deeper meaning. It is more than feeling sorry for someone; having mercy means that we enter into the other person's suffering. We feel the other person's pain, see through her eyes, and place ourselves inside her heart and mind. When we crawl into the life and skin of the other we are moved to respond and that response is showing mercy.

How to live a mercy-filled life is a question that my FSPA affiliate group, Wisdom Walkers, has asked for quite a while. Our group of 19 sisters and lay women gathers for support and prayer at Marywood Franciscan Spirituality Center in Arbor Vitae, Wisconsin. We are women from all over northern and western Wisconsin.

Being on the holy ground of Marywood allows the burdens and cares to fall away so that we can be present to one another. During our time together we offer the mercy of listening to one another's journeys and support through words of wisdom (but mostly through hugs). We pray together, reflect together and

challenge one another to live a more mercy-filled life.

It always feels good to get together but we know we are called to reach outside our group to meet the needs of our brothers and sisters. As individuals we minister to those in jail, parishes, food pantries, hospitals and



When Marywood Franciscan Spirituality Center was in need of a deep cleaning, members of an FSPA affiliate group, the Wisdom Walkers, stepped up to the challenge. From left, affiliates Joan Meeder, Marge McCardle, Erin Fox, Barb Grzywacz and Barb Sell

Photo courtesy of Erin Fox, affiliate

hospices and Newman centers; in restorative justice settings and many more surroundings. We are living out the corporal and spiritual works of mercy in our personal lives, but this past year we began ministering together.

Last spring we provided set-up and kitchen duties at a drug and alcohol awareness event. It was so good to be the volunteers supporting this important cause.

In the fall some of us volunteered at Marywood to deep clean the cabins and lodge. Sharing physical work, prayer and food together brought us closer than any number of our monthly meetings.

Most recently, two special affiliates provided invaluable support when

they volunteered to cook, serve and clean up at a recent *Couples Valentine Retreat* sponsored by Marywood. Thanks to their work, 10 couples enriched their marriage and enjoyed a delicious gourmet meal.

We have found that working together to serve needs for a common purpose is both energizing and fun.

Jesus is our example of mercy. He crawled inside the lives of Mary, Peter, Zacchaeus, the woman with the hemorrhage, the lepers and all of the other people we meet in the Gospels. He saw their pain and in mercy reached out to make them whole; to give them food for the journey of their lives.

For some of us it's easy to buy food and contribute it to a local food bank, but can we reach out a little further to invite a neighbor who lives alone to our house for a home-

cooked meal? Or, can we offer a listening ear or a hug to someone going through a tough time? Opportunities to be people of mercy are in our own homes, right outside our door. ■



Joyce Heil became an affiliate with FSPA in 1997. With an extensive background in health care, education and spirituality, she provides programs at Marywood Franciscan Spirituality Center on various aspects of spirituality. She also conducts retreats and provides outreach programs to parishes and other groups as requested.





# Vocations

## Sharing signs: spreading a message of vocations today

**H**ow do you reach today's discerning women? You show them a sign.

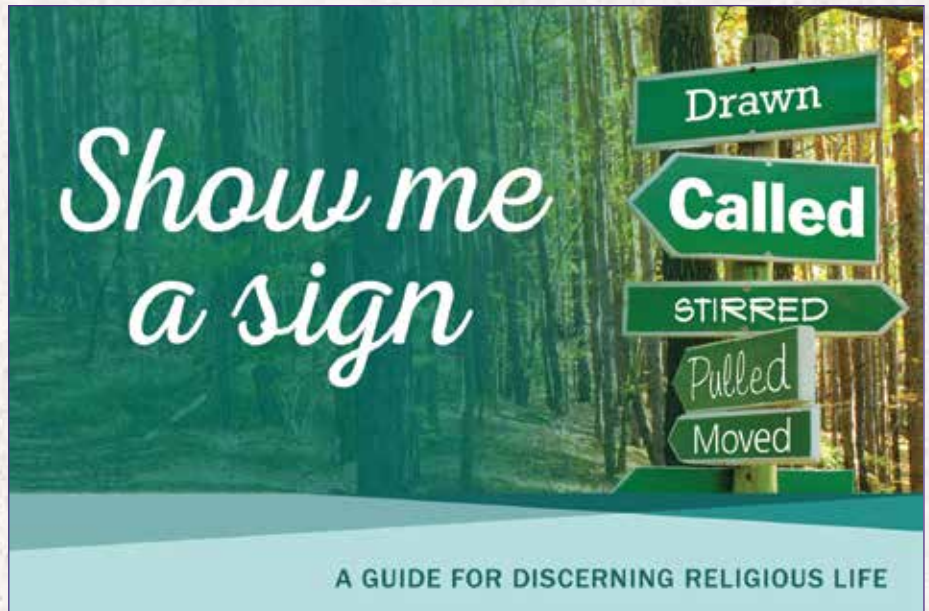
*Show me a sign* is a new set of vocation tools the FSPA membership office is using to reach out to women who are wondering if they are called to religious life today. The tools include a *Show me a sign* blog and newsletter (in both print and electronic formats). And the messages serve to demystify religious life.

Amy Taylor, FSPA, serves as the blog and newsletter publisher. She says, "The questions we hear from young women are very basic, 'can sisters have cats?' to very deep, 'will I ever see my family again?' And we want to answer their questions (both yes, by the way) and share the everyday stories and ministries of Franciscan Sisters living the Gospel life today."



Sisters Katie Mitchell (left) and Amy Taylor staff the FSPA booth during the Los Angeles Religious Education Conference. The annual conference attracts thousands of young adults and religious education teachers. Photo courtesy of Amy Taylor, FSPA

Sister Amy also hopes the women and men walking with young women today—family members, pastors, spiritual advisors, campus ministers and spiritual directors—will use *Show me a sign* to nurture the potential vocation. "We know that young women reach out to others for support during their discernment. *Show me a sign* serves as a



valuable resource—from the perspectives of today's Catholic sisters—that support teams can share. "We distributed more than 1,000 cards promoting *Show me a sign* at the 2016 Religious Ed Congress in Los Angeles. For those religious education teachers, campus ministers and others in the field working with today's youth, we look forward to hearing how they use this resource and hope they join in the conversation through the blog's comment section."

*Show me a sign* is supported by a series of videos produced by FSPA to allow young women to virtually meet Franciscan Sisters today. The *Called* video series features nine sisters, ranging in age from 30s to 60s, who share their personal discernment stories and provide honest answers to questions about family reactions, the vow of celibacy and more.

"Religious life is a wonderful option for today's young woman. And if God is calling her, we hope our stories shared through *Show me a sign* offer guidance, moments of reflection and faith that there is joy in community." ■

### Follow *Show me a sign*

- Subscribe to the blog: [www.fspa.org/showmeasign](http://www.fspa.org/showmeasign)
- Subscribe to the e-newsletter: text FSPA to 22828 or sign up at [www.fspa.org/showmeasign](http://www.fspa.org/showmeasign)
- Subscribe to the print newsletter: email [membership@fspa.org](mailto:membership@fspa.org) or call 608-782-5610



# Furthering your spirituality

## Christine Center Willard, Wisconsin

### *Nurturing the Sacred Within*

Come learn the chakra system, a God-given gift placed within our bodies, like a compass to guide us on our life's journey. Presented Sept. 18 to 23, 2016, by Corrina Thomas, FSPA, you'll learn how the chakra system provides a map to follow on the path to personal growth. We may be focused on rising above the limitations of our lives to better understand spiritual realms, or we may be on a path to bring spiritual concepts that we know are true into the actions of our everyday life. We will learn how to nurture the sacred that is within each one of us in a way that is practical, direct and profound. Registration details at [www.christinecenter.org](http://www.christinecenter.org) or 715-267-7507.

## Franciscan Spirituality Center La Crosse, Wisconsin

### *The Spirit of Golf: A Retreat for Men*

Steve Spilde, FSC associate director and dedicated golfer, will lead this retreat from June 17 to 19, 2016. He will explore the life lessons to be learned from this beautiful and frustrating game. The weekend will include 45 holes of golf over three days, time for personal reflection, discussions that link golf with spirituality and that draw on the writings of M. Scott Peck, evening socials and great meals. Makes a great Father's Day gift! Registration details at [www.FScenter.org](http://www.FScenter.org) or 608-791-5295.

## Marywood Franciscan Spirituality Center Arbor Vitae, Wisconsin

### *Praying the Psalms: A Guided Retreat*

Experience the psalms as a way of praying the many movements in our life journey when addressing the Holy One. From July 8 to 12, 2016, join presenter Marla Lang, FSPA, and enjoy morning and evening communal prayer, morning presentation and afternoons free for personal reflection. Daily spiritual direction is included. Registration details are available at [www.marywoodsc.org](http://www.marywoodsc.org) or call 715-385-3750.

## Prairiewoods Franciscan Spirituality Center Hiawatha, Iowa

### *The Divine Circle Retreat: Exploring Creativity in the Circle of Fifths & the Color Wheel*

Have you ever felt the presence of the divine spirit while listening to or making music? Do you feel closer to God when looking at a beautiful work of art? Join pianist,

composer and educator Laura Caviani for this retreat Aug. 12 to 14, 2016. Use the circle of fifths, color wheel and labyrinth as tools to connect to your creative spirit, which comes from God. Come find your creative connection to the divine! More information is available at [www.Prairiewoods.org](http://www.Prairiewoods.org) or 319-395-6700.



Encounter people of courage, faith and hope. Learn of their dreams and challenges. Join us for the opportunity to deepen your own solidarity with our Southern neighbors.



Mexico~Chiapas: June 20-30, 2016

El Salvador: July 14-24, 2016

Guatemala: August 11-21, 2016

*Global Awareness  
Through Experience*

[www.GATE-Travel.org](http://www.GATE-Travel.org) ♦ P:608.791.5283  
E:gate@fspa.org





# In Memoriam

## Rejoice, you who are alive in Christ

### **Sister Marcella (Anice) Hackman** **April 8, 1925-Oct. 15, 2015**

Born in Festina, Iowa, Sister Marcella served as an elementary teacher in Iowa and Wisconsin for 34 years, including six years each at St. Mary's Ridge, Wisconsin, and Cedar Rapids, Iowa. She taught for five years and served as principal for 13 years at Sherrill, Iowa. Sister Marcella then served as chaplain in Osage, Iowa, before moving to Guttenberg, Iowa, where she ministered as a director of religious education and pastoral minister for seven years. From 1994 to 2000 she was a member of the pastoral care staff at St. Francis Medical Center in La Crosse.

Sister Marcella retired to St. Rose Convent in 2000 and to Villa St. Joseph in 2008.



### **Sister Marguerite Hagman** **Nov. 10, 1922-Nov. 8, 2015**

Sister Marguerite was born in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, and named Dolores Frances.

She taught at the elementary level for 42 years in schools in Iowa and Wisconsin, including 17 years at Immaculate Conception School in Eau Claire. She ministered for a year as a religious education coordinator at St. Therese's, Schofield, Wisconsin, and then moved to River Falls, Wisconsin, where she served as pastoral minister of St. Bridget Parish from 1991 to 2006.

Sister Marguerite retired at St. Rose Convent in 2006 and moved to Villa St. Joseph in 2015.



### **Sister Charlotte (Charmaine) Seubert** **Jan. 21, 1936-Nov. 8, 2015**

Sister Charlotte, born in Marathon, Wisconsin, served as an elementary teacher for five years in Wisconsin and Iowa before volunteering as a missionary in El Salvador in 1962. Sister Charlotte, along with two other FSPA, opened an elementary school in 1963 in Santa Ana, El Salvador. After the school was well established, she became administrator and teacher at La Providencia,

El Salvador, a center to train rural leaders. Sister Charlotte then returned to Santa Ana to minister as a teacher, administrator and pastoral minister for 19 years. She returned to the United States in 1981 and continued serving the Hispanic people (in Muscatine, Iowa) for six years. In 1987, she became the diocesan coordinator of Hispanic ministries for the Davenport Diocese, serving for nine years. Sister Charlotte returned to parish ministry, working with Hispanics and serving as director of religious education at St. Mary's Parish in Davenport before moving to Moline, Illinois, to serve as director of religious education and adult faith and RCIA coordinator at Christ the King Parish.

She moved to Villa St. Joseph in October of 2015.



### **Sister Mary (Mary Bernard) Stadelman, FSPA** **March 28, 1927-Nov. 23, 2015**

Born in Blanchardville, Wisconsin, Sister Mary taught in elementary schools in Iowa, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington and Wisconsin for 33 years, including 17 years in Spokane, Washington. She then ministered as chaplain at Sacred Heart Medical Center, Spokane, from 1981 to 1999.

Sister Mary moved in 2001 to St. Rose Convent where she served as sacristan for three years. In 2012, she moved to Villa St. Joseph.



### **Sister Cordelle Adams, FSPA** **Aug. 31, 1932-Nov. 23, 2015**

Sister Cordelle was born in Stratford, Wisconsin, and was baptized with the name Alice Mae.

Sister Cordelle initially entered the field of education, teaching for 22 years in Wisconsin, Washington and Iowa. In 1978, she began a career in social services and home health care in Wisconsin, mostly in La Crosse, for the next 20 years.

In 1999, Sister Cordelle moved to St. Rose Convent and served as a volunteer. Villa St. Joseph became her home in 2007.





**Sister Georgia Hammell, FSPA**  
**Sept. 28, 1918-Dec. 12, 2015**

Sister Georgia was born on a farm near New Albin, Iowa, and named Catherine Elizabeth.

She served as an elementary teacher for six years. She then changed ministries, serving as a nursing instructor at St. Francis School of Nursing and Viterbo College in La Crosse for 34 years, and at St. Anthony Hospital, Carroll, Iowa for six years. Sister Georgia served her FSPA community as formation director for the Healthcare Province from 1966 to 1970. From 1989 to 2000, she ministered in the Marshall Islands as a nursing instructor at the College of Micronesia in Majuro.

Sister Georgia retired to St. Rose Convent in 2000 and moved to Villa St. Joseph in 2010.



**Affiliates**

**Nora Durst**  
**June 9, 1923-Nov. 20, 2015**

Nora was an FSPA covenant affiliate for many years and was a member of the Pax et Bonum community. She enjoyed a long career as a registered nurse working in Richland Center, Sparta, Marshfield, Eau Claire and Hillsboro (Wisconsin), retiring in 2007 at the age of 84. Nora served as pastoral associate and coordinator of religious education programs for three parishes until she retired at age 90.



**Peggy Wilberding**  
**Feb. 14, 1935-Jan. 11, 2016**

Peggy became a prayer affiliate in 2007. She grew up in Carroll, Iowa, and spent time in Colorado from 1982 to 2005. She and her husband Donald raised seven children. Peggy enjoyed reading and singing and was very involved in the local community. She was a member of St. Anthony Hospital Auxiliary, Carroll Catholic Daughters of the Americas, RSVP and St. Lawrence Catholic Church in Carroll, Iowa.



Read the complete FSPA obituaries  
under News/Events at [www.fspa.org](http://www.fspa.org).

**My Perspective**

continued from page 8

in response, inspire with a composed promise of prayer, a spiritual thought.

**To pray for the living and the dead ...**

It is written that in reflection on his life before conversion Francis struggled intensely, wondering how God could forgive him for the sins of his youth he couldn't forgive of himself. With unspeakable joy and sweetness he received God's consolation and mercy.

Our prayers can be just as simple and persistent. We can experience the mercy and compassion of God by simply saying "Jesus, have mercy on me." We can pray for our living friends and enemies; we can pray for loved ones or not-so-loved ones who have gone before us.

**To forgive offenses ... to bear patiently with those who do us ill ...**

In the days shortly after Francis and his few followers went about announcing peace, some brazenly persecuted them as if they were criminals. That they could continue to follow their convictions, supporting and encouraging each other in devout prayer, is remarkable.

We might ask ourselves "Am I the one to ridicule or criticize those who are dissimilar—those with a different color of skin or sexual orientation? Opinions different than mine? If I am the insulted one, tortured by another, how do I respond? Can I pray for those who hurt me?"

Ultimately, practicing mercy happens in the ordinary events of our lives. That is what Jesus did, what St. Francis did, what Pope Francis urges us now to do.

Will we accept the invitation? ■



*Sister Joan Weisenbeck is in her 59th year of religious life with the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration. She is retired from extensive ministries in education, parish ministry and spirituality. Sister Joan serves today as a spiritual director and volunteers with various organizations. Icon writing and Franciscan spirituality are her favorite interests.*





# Addenda

## Sister Mary Ann Gschwind accepts Faithful Servant Award

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of La Crosse, Wisconsin, presented the Bill Medland Faithful Servant Award to Mary Ann Gschwind, FSPA, at a luncheon on March 17. The award is presented to a La Crosse-area community member who exemplifies many of the same qualities and gifts that Bill Medland shared with the La Crosse community, church and those in need. The award honors his wonderful ability to inspire others to participate in the completion of these endeavors.

The organization recognized Sister Mary Ann's dedication to this community through various service projects, boards—including Catholic Charities—and committees. "We are very blessed to have Sister Mary Ann as a leader in our community ... her leadership, commitment and continued willingness to serve are why we are so excited to honor her with this award."



From left, Bishop William Callahan, Sister Mary Ann Gschwind and Roberto Partarrieu

Photo courtesy of Catholic Charities

## Sisters collaborate, invite all to #PrayItForward

To shine a spotlight on the profound impact of Catholic sisters in our communities and around the world, and in conjunction with National Women's History Month, the third annual National Catholic Sisters Week was held in March.

Catholic Sisters of the Upper Mississippi River Valley, including FSPA, celebrated by launching a social justice campaign called "#PrayItForward." The campaign, funded by an NCSW grant, used social media to create awareness of Catholic sisters and their ministries of prayer and education.

Six short videos were created featuring Catholic sisters holding signs that illustrate facts around the topics of forgiveness, human trafficking, peace and nonviolence, care of Earth, immigration, and love and compassion. The videos asked viewers to join sisters in raising awareness of and praying for resolution to the issues.

The videos are posted at [www.fspa.org](http://www.fspa.org) (select National Catholic Sisters Week under news/events).



Sister Suzanne Rubenbauer, pictured here during the #PrayItForward filming, is featured in the care of the Earth video.

Photo by Jessica Russo

## FSPA centenarians

FSPA centenarians, left to right: Sister Drusilla Trussoni, born Dec. 30, 1915, Sister Mary Myron Stork, born Jan. 30, 1916, and Sister Virginia McCarville, born March 2, 1916. All three sisters celebrated with family and friends. Later this spring, FSPA will honor the sisters by planting trees in their names on the Villa St. Joseph grounds just outside of La Crosse, Wisconsin.





**Kumbo connection: a journey to La Crosse's sister city**

La Crosse, Wisconsin, has seven sister cities—a network that unites thousands of citizen diplomats and volunteers. In December, Georgia Christensen and Helen Elsbernd, both FSPA, joined a delegation visit to La Crosse's seventh sister city, Kumbo, Cameroon, in West Africa. The delegation visited hospitals, schools, farms, banks and water treatment facilities, to name a few stops.

They also heard the results of the Kumbo Rotary Club's needs assessment, including: "From our findings in the field of education, statistics show that out of 100 schools visited, 80 percent lack text books and libraries ... 70 percent of these schools have poor sanitary conditions ... thereby putting students and teachers at risk of contracting cholera and other related illnesses."

Through this experience, the delegation members are reminded that there is no better way to understand the needs of the world than by meeting—and understanding—its people.

*Top photo, Sister Helen Elsbernd with Caroline Mbiybe, a member of the Cameroon Parliament; middle photo, Sister Georgia Christensen joins in a dance; bottom photo, the Kumbo city council and mayor in shirts given to them by the La Crosse group. The La Crosse group dressed in African attire: from left Sister Helen Elsbernd, Nickijo Hager, Tom Strom, Sister Georgia Christensen, Sara Sullivan, Lee Raasch and Susan Fox*

Photos courtesy of Sisters Helen Elsbernd and Georgia Christensen



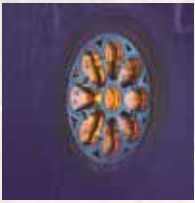
*The Twin Birds  
by John Wirba*

Let the twin birds sing  
The love songs  
Of Partnership  
A great friendship  
Two cities intertwined  
La Crosse in the winter  
And Kumbo in the summer.

The twin birds sing  
A song of two cities  
The rising notes of a love  
In the shadows  
Of a cola-nut tree  
Songs of a promise  
A shared human promise  
Between the twin birds  
And the twin birds.

Let the twin birds sing  
From La Crosse to Kumbo  
Let the twin birds sing  
From Kumbo to La Crosse  
Raising sweet voices  
In song and love  
To two cities moving  
Arm in arm  
Step by step  
Hand in hand  
Into a future burning bright!





# Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration

Communications Office  
912 Market St.  
La Crosse WI 54601-4782



Visit us on Facebook:  
[facebook.com/franciscansisters](https://facebook.com/franciscansisters)



Follow us on Twitter:  
[twitter.com/FSPAtweets](https://twitter.com/FSPAtweets)



Follow us on Pinterest:  
[www.pinterest.com/fspapins](https://www.pinterest.com/fspapins)



Visit us on YouTube:  
[youtube.com/franciscansisters](https://youtube.com/franciscansisters)



## Reunion Blessings

The Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration recognize that summer is often the season for school reunions, either all school or for graduating classes celebrating a milestone year. We offer our blessing on your time together!

For schools that had an FSPA presence: if you'd like an update on a teacher or principal who ministered with you—or would like their presence at your event—email [communications@fspa.org](mailto:communications@fspa.org). We also encourage you to like us on social media and share your reunion photos and school memories with us!

