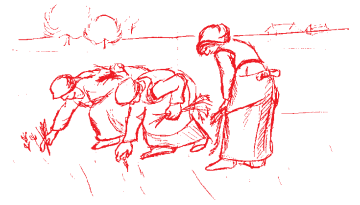


# Franciscan Gleanings



Volume XIX, No. 1

Newsletter of the Williamsville Franciscans

Spring 2005



*St. Joseph–St. Patrick Church in Utica, N.Y. was filled to overflowing for a Mass of Thanksgiving celebrating Mother Marianne Cope*

*photo courtesy of The Post-Standard*

## ***Tracing the Steps to Sainthood: “Ordinary” Mother Marianne Lived Extraordinary Life***

*by Jeff Paterson, Gleanings Editorial Board Member*

**M**other Marianne Cope, a Franciscan sister from central New York, left everything she knew and followed God’s call halfway around the world. She spent the last 35 years of her life caring for lepers. She is now on the verge of sainthood.

Without a doubt, this was an extraordinary life.

Yet Sister Patricia Burkard, OSF, wants Mother Marianne to be remembered as ordinary. “She never saw herself as

*continued on p. 3*

# New Life



*“Choose life that you and your descendants may live.”  
(Deuteronomy 30:19)*

*Dear Friends,*

*The theme of **NEW LIFE** for this issue of **Gleanings** could not be more appropriate at this time in our history as Sisters of St. Francis. We have chosen new life as part of our recent merger and union. As you read along in this edition of our newsletter, you will see the reward of our actions and dreams already being fulfilled. It reminds me of the poem by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow entitled **“A Psalm for Life”***

*“Tell me not, in mournful numbers,  
Life is but an empty dream....”*

*All life is precious and has purpose. You, who are parents, live out your dreams for life through your children and grandchildren. We, as women religious, live out our dreams through those whose lives we have touched – the patient with leprosy served by Blessed Mother Marianne of Molokai, the young student, being served by the sisters at Nazareth Day Nursery, or the mother and child in need who look to the sisters at the Center for Joy to help them. Their stories can be found in the pages that follow.*

*The challenge placed before all of us is learning how to live out our dreams in joy as well as in sorrow, in prosperity as well as in need. At the same time we hope for*

*and trust in a brighter day and a better return on our life’s investment of faith and love.*

*As women religious, our reward for choosing life is the gift of faithful friends such as you, our readers, who are always there for us, supporting us as our companions in prayer and service to those who seek our help. You make that help possible.*

*“Not enjoyment, and not sorrow  
Is our destined end or way;  
But to act, that each tomorrow  
Find us farther than today.”  
 (“A Psalm for Life”*

*by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow)*

*I am sure that, as you partner with us in prayer and mission, you are all “way ahead of yourselves,” farther even than tomorrow!*

*Jesus said: “I came that they may have life, and have it to the full.” (John 10:10)*

*My prayer for you is that you may experience the joy of choosing life in all its forms and ways.*

*Peace & all good,*

*Sister Marian Rose Mansius, OSF  
Sister Marian Rose Mansius, OSF  
Regional Councilor – Williamsville*



# Mother Marianne Cope

*continued from p. 1*

someone doing great things,” said Burkard. “She saw herself as a Franciscan woman reaching out to the needy and abandoned.”

Burkard, general minister of the Sisters of St. Francis, spoke of Mother Marianne at a Feb. 27<sup>th</sup> liturgy at the Church of the Assumption in Syracuse. During that ceremony, nearly 1,000 people welcomed Mother Marianne’s remains back to central New York. It was the latest stop in Mother Marianne’s journey toward sainthood.

The journey “began where she died,” said Burkard, on Jan. 23 at a graveside service in Hawaii. The next day, Mother Marianne’s remains were exhumed, a requirement for sainthood. Finally, on Jan. 31, some 500 people gathered at Our Lady of Peace Cathedral in the Diocese of Honolulu to take leave of their beloved Mother Marianne.

It was 1883 when Mother Marianne left her Syracuse motherhouse for Hawaii.



*Knights stand guard at the coffin of Mother Marianne Cope. Photo by Sr. Barbara Whalen*

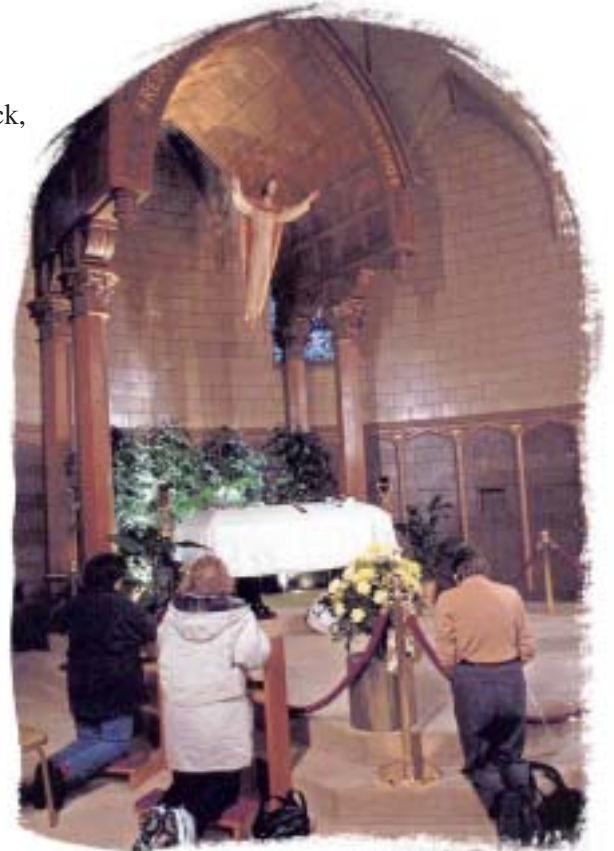
She predicted she would be back, “maybe after a few weeks.” But she never returned, engrossed as she was in her ministry there.

In answering this call, Mother Marianne followed a narrow path. She had received a letter asking for sister-nurses to travel to Hawaii to care for the poor sick. While more than 50 sisters in North America received the same letter, only Mother Marianne responded.

It truly was a leap of faith, according to Bishop James Moynihan of Syracuse, who presided at the liturgy of welcome. “She was told they were the poor sick,” said Bishop Moynihan. “She did not know they were lepers. She knew they needed sister-nurses, and by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, she decided to go.”

After five years of ministry in Honolulu, Mother Marianne went to Molokai to take up the work of the ailing Father Damien de Veuster, now also a candidate for sainthood. She cared for lepers there for three decades, until her death in 1918 at age 81.

According to Bishop Moynihan, Mother Marianne’s life closely mirrors that of Jesus. Citing the classic song “Don’t Fence Me In,” Moynihan said that Jesus ignored the fences of race and status. “In Jesus’ time, lepers were the outcasts of society,” said Moynihan, “and yet we know he went among them



*Over 1,200 visitors have come to pray at Mother Marianne’s coffin since her remains have been returned to Syracuse. photo courtesy of The Post-Standard*

and healed them.” Likening Mother Marianne to Jesus, Moynihan described both as “...rebels with a cause.”

“Prejudice would not control them,” said Moynihan. “Their minds were too big. Their spirits were too big.”

The ceremony truly was a homecoming for Mother Marianne. A native of Utica, she was received into the Sisters of St. Francis in 1862 at the Church of the Assumption. She later served as principal of the parish school, and eventually her nephew became pastor there.

Clearly, the people of Syracuse still feel a close connection to the future saint.

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# Nazareth Nursery:

## *A ministry nearing its Centennial*

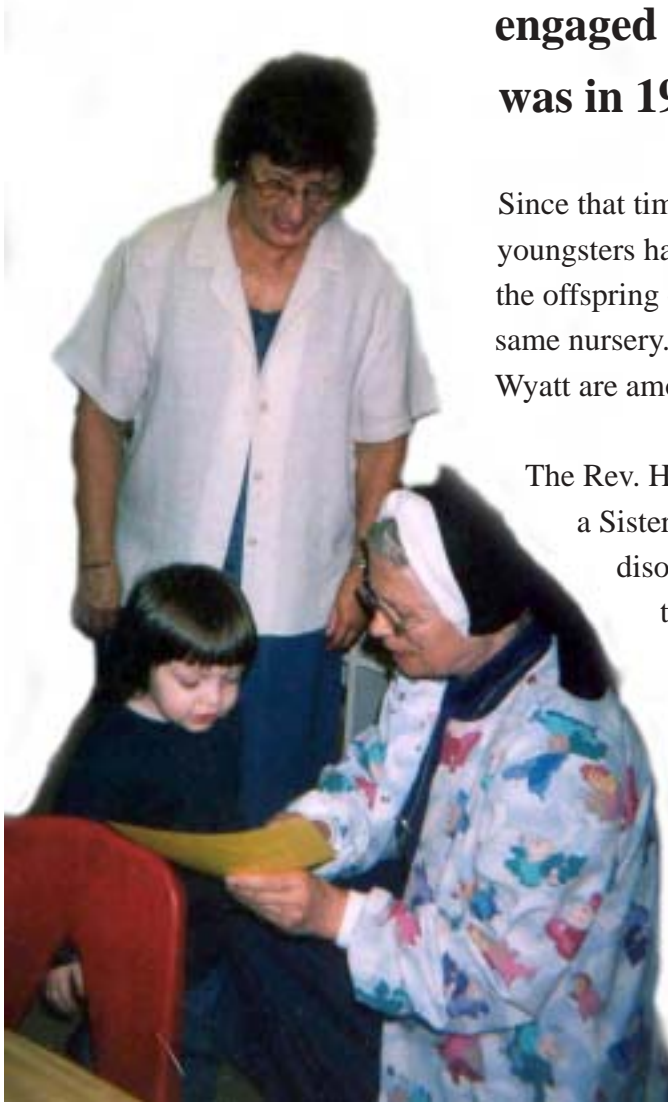
*by Annette Reino Sindona, Franciscan Associate*

*Below – Sister Roberta Smith, Leadership Team Member for Sisters of St. Francis, and Sister Lucy Sabatini listen to a child read*

**On the lower west side of Manhattan, the Hastings Franciscans have been actively engaged in a ministry that is as vital today as it was in 1912 when they were asked to assume it.**

Since that time they have operated Nazareth Nursery and well over 5,000 youngsters have attended classes. Some of the children there today are the offspring of children welcomed and taught many years ago at this same nursery. Dorothy Day's daughter and an ancestor of actress Jane Wyatt are among the notables that attended the Nursery over the years.

The Rev. Henry Rensselaer, S.J., and his two sisters, one of whom was a Sister of Charity founded the school in 1901. The three had been disowned by their affluent family because of their ministry to the poor and sick. It was a time when there was a desperate need to have someone care for infants and toddlers to enable mothers to go to work and help support their families. Poverty and illness were rampant in New York City. The Sisters sought contributions from the very beginning so they could perform this work. Fees were, and are always, kept to a minimum and rarely was anyone turned away due to lack of funds when the welfare of a child was at stake. Many who benefited from the program are the largest supporters today.



*continued on p. 5*

Over the years the number of Sisters involved at the Nursery has changed. Today there are two, Sisters Mary Maceda and Lucy Sabatini, while at times there has been as many as six. The Sisters are very grateful for the expertise and assistance of a dedicated group of fine teachers and aides who have joined them in this great work.

One finds the Nursery incredibly peaceful for the quiet pervades the atmosphere even though there may be as many as 50 students in attendance. In three separate classrooms one can see children under five playing, doing math, engaged in art projects or learning to read. Since they are happy and involved there is no need to remind them to be quiet.

The children are taught social skills as well as academics utilizing the Montessori Method. This enables the children to learn at their own rate and level without the pressure from peers and limitations of strict time-based standards.

In addition there is a religious component to the program. In each classroom there is an area which has all the items necessary in the celebration of the Mass. These are all miniature that allows the children a hands-on experience with each article similar to the other parts of the Nursery program. Many times

they attend services held in the Chapel in the same building. Thus when they leave to enter kindergarten at the age of five they are not only ready to worship at Mass but they are well prepared to socialize not only with their peers but adults as well. This, coupled with the advanced knowledge of the three "R's" prepares them for the next step in their lives.

Sister Lucy hopes that the Nursery school will "...be the light that encourages others to become Montessori teachers who help children fall in love with God all by themselves. I dream that many more schools, such as ours, will be developed in the years ahead."

#### *Editor's Note*

*This article was well on its way to being printed when we learned of the unexpected death of, Sister Mary Maceda, one of the two Sisters ministering at Nazareth Nursery/Montessori School. She has had a long history of dedicated serves to hundred's of children.*

*Sister Mary considered it a tremendous grace and blessing to be connected with the early formation of faith, intellect and character of God's children.*

*Let us remember her in prayer and pray that we too will be inspired and be faithful to our call to make a difference in the lives of those who call upon God for our help.*

*If you would like more information or are interested in helping Nazareth Nursery contact Sister Lucy Sabatini, 214 West 15<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, N.Y. (212) 243-1881.*



*Left – Sister Lucy Sabatini being greeted by the children.*

# *A Walk Down Michigan Street, Niagara Falls, N.Y.*

*by Sister Mary E. Balthasar  
and Sister Joan Hupp*

**L**eaving Main

*Street and coming  
upon Michigan, one  
comes upon a small  
house, known in the  
neighborhood as*

**“The Center for Joy”.**

*Sisters Beth Niederpruem (center) assists  
Quaruan Bradley (left) and Rondell  
Brundidge (right).*



Begun in 1992 by Daughter of Charity, Sister Mary Francis Bassick, the Center is run by Sister Beth Niederpruem, OSF, who has been Executive Director since 1999. Sister Beth is a vivacious, sharp-witted, energetic social worker, who wishes to reach out to neighborhood community groups. She is active in the local community as a member of Heart, Love and Soul, Inc. Soup Kitchen and Pantry Board and a member of the Health Association of Niagara County, Inc. Board. She is also part of the VOICE Niagara Group, which helps to bring a faith based action group to the community. Sister Beth tells the visitor that the Mission of the Center is to provide a home-like environment for neighborhood residents who desire to further their education.

She explains that the primary focus she and her staff have for the Center is providing information, referrals and support to women and children. Staff members include Sister Nancy Walsh, OSF, Bennie Hamilton, Carlos Bradberry, and students from Niagara University. Sister Nancy, who is in her second year with the program as an after school tutor, has spent 46 years as a reading teacher in Catholic schools in Buffalo, Texas and Florida. Fifteen of those years she served as a special education teacher in the Buffalo public schools. Bennie and Carlos work with Foster Grandparents and the students from Niagara



*William and Summer participates in the "11-17" program.*

University volunteer their time tutoring children from grades 1–3. Focus on Family, Family and Children Services and Healthy Neighborhood meet at the Center and provide educational programs.

If your walk is taken in July, you will hear and see 25-30 five to ten year olds at the ever popular summer Peace Camp. Teen counselors assist in the direction of the children's programs. With a week's time on the walker's hands, they would discover that on Mondays of each week the Focus on Families group work with parents to help develop better parenting skills. Tuesdays bring women of all ages together for fun and friendly conversation. These meetings help them with both spiritual and mental growth. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, second and third graders are assisted in the after school-tutoring program. And on Thursday evenings a small group of teens called "The 11- 17 group, named after the address of the Center for Joy, meet for two hours to discuss job skills and opportunities and life experiences which will help in their future education. Food, support, laughter, and discussions keep the group open to cultural

activities, neighborhood programs and other means of assistance.

What keeps the vital Center going? It operates because of grants and gifts. The biggest donor and really stabilizing income comes from the Joy Family foundation. At present, Sister Beth is working with a consultant to formulate a strategic plan for gaining more financial support for the Center's projects. The educational needs are vast in this area where 60% of the children live below the poverty level and 20% of the adults have less than a GED or high school diploma.



*Benita and Rondell participated in the Niagara University fun fair.*



*Above Sister Nancy Walsh helps Quaruan in the after school program*

Many school children and parishes have made gifts of books, art materials, and games, all of which help the children learn to interact socially with each other.

As you complete your walk, you may ask yourself how you and others could help. Volunteers are always needed. Paper products and school supplies are always received with gratitude. You could provide volunteer labor for a new kitchen floor covering and removal of a wall so that the working space will be more functional. If you would like to give witness in a very tangible way through your prayerful support, contribution of time as a volunteer or lend your financial assistance to the Center for Joy, Sister Beth can be reached at [niederpruem@yahoo.com](mailto:niederpruem@yahoo.com) or (716) 282-7588 or Center for Joy, 1117 Michigan Street, Niagara Falls, NY, 14305.

# Peace through Justice

## FOR THE SAKE OF CHILDREN

*by Sr. Bea Leising, OSF*



**T**he care and education of young people has been an important part of the ministry of the Sisters of St. Francis over the years. We have taught and been administrators in many schools and religious education programs. For many years we also staffed the German Roman Catholic Orphanage. We have seen this work among children both as a great privilege and also as a tremendous responsibility. In collaboration with the families we have sought to encourage the growth of responsible and respectful Christian youth.

Grounded in this ministry, the Sisters of St. Francis have chosen to become actively involved in a two-pronged

effort to change that which we see to be a complete denial of this important task. Companies producing and promoting video games, television programs and other forms of media have blatantly pursued financial gain with little concern for its effect on young people.

The February 3<sup>rd</sup> issue of THE BUFFALO NEWS carried an article on Adelphia Communications' decision "to offer 'triple-X' adult films, the most explicit brand of adult movies," to cable subscribers in Western New York and throughout the country. A spokesperson saw this as "a competitive issue for us." While Adelphia has stressed that security controls will ensure that only adults will be able to access these films, this type of programming surely cannot benefit the community at large.

**S**ome of our sisters sent letters to Thomas Haywood, Adelphia's area Vice President expressing our deep displeasure over their decision to provide hard-core pornography and asking for a reconsideration of their decision. The Diocese of Buffalo encouraged this action through the New York State Catholic Conference. A sample letter was found on [network@nyscatholic.org](mailto:network@nyscatholic.org). In less than a month THE BUFFALO NEWS ran an article on February 25th stating,

"Adelphia Communications has quietly canceled its plan to provide the hardest of hard-core adult movies over its cable system..." In fact, it further stated that, "Adelphia will remove it from all of its systems." Now it is time for our sisters to write letters of gratitude and support to Adelphia's leaders for this action.

The second part of our effort to ensure more wholesome video and media for our young people concerns the violent video games that are available to them. In an article in THE CORPORATE EXAMINER which is published by the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, it was written that, "most of the video games being marketed to our children are rooted in a culture of sex and violence." When one hears of the violent acts perpetrated by some young people, one cannot help but wonder what part was played by such violent video games that teach criminal strategy, hit man skills and exploitative sex.

The Sisters of St. Francis are members of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) which is a coalition of institutional investors that works to affect social change in corporate America. Our sisters will join their campaign to educate and to encourage corporations to take a more

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## FOR THE SAKE OF CHILDREN

*continued from p. 8*

responsible stance in the production and marketing of video games. We will be sending letters to corporations involved in the violent video game market such as Circuit City Stores, Kmart Holding Company, and Nintendo of America, Inc. As investors, we also will vote on shareholder resolutions addressing this concern. Information on this campaign can be found on the ICCR web site [www.iccr.org](http://www.iccr.org).

Oscar Romero, the former Archbishop of San Salvador who was assassinated in 1980, once said, "We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that. This enables us to do something, and to do it very well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way... We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker." It is with this attitude that we approach these efforts that more wholesome entertainment and activities might be available for young people.



**LEAVE A LEGACY™**  
WESTERN NEW YORK

Family, health, community and faith ... we all have things we are grateful for ... causes we believe in ... people and experiences that have enriched our lives. Anyone can leave a legacy. Please remember the Sisters of St. Francis in your will.

## Tracing the Steps to Sainthood continued



*Sister Eleanor Spiridillozzi, coordinator of visitors, places roses on the remains of Mother Marianne Cope which rests in the Syracuse chapel of the Sisters of St. Francis. These roses which have been touched to the remains of Mother Marianne are given to visitors who are ill and come to pray for healing. As of April there have been 2,285 visitors to the shrine.*

Sister Marian Rose Mansius, OSF, a councilor for the Sisters of St. Francis, said that hundreds of people visited the Franciscans' Syracuse motherhouse throughout February to venerate Mother Marianne's remains.

It makes sense to Burkard, who continues to emphasize the "ordinary" nature of Mother Marianne's life. "She was so much like us," said Burkard. "She walked these same streets in central New York. Her life reminds us that ordinary people can be saints. Saints aren't just those with a lofty life, giving an example we can't follow. Mother Marianne gives us a simple example of holiness and love of neighbor."

Marian Wise of Syracuse was one of the hundreds of local residents who attended the Feb. 27 liturgy to welcome Mother Marianne. "I just touched the casket and I was very moved," said Wise. "I've been praying to her a lot."

In the days and weeks following the ceremony of welcome, the Sisters of St. Francis planned to continue retracing Mother Marianne's steps. On March 6, the Sisters accompanied Mother Marianne's remains to St. Joseph Parish in Utica, where Mother Marianne spent her childhood years. Mother Marianne was then to take up permanent rest at the Syracuse motherhouse.

There will be at least one more leg on Mother Marianne's journey. On Pentecost Sunday, May 15, she will be beatified in Rome – not the Rome of central New York, but the Rome that is the seat of the Church. Last December, the Vatican accepted a miracle attributed to Mother Marianne's intercession. With one more documented miracle, she will be eligible for canonization.

An extraordinary end for a seemingly ordinary woman.

## Neumann High School Reunion Being Planned

Over the past few months we have been meeting with several key individuals associated with Neumann High School. The Williamsville Sisters of St. Francis have shared a warm and fruitful history with both the old and new Neumann High Schools and have many fond memories of our years spent there. Our sisters served as teachers, principals, as well as students, and we consider our years spent at the school as a gift and a blessing.

On **Saturday, July 16<sup>th</sup>**, we will host a special Mass at Ss. Peter & Paul followed by a Reunion Reception at St. Mary of the Angels in Williamsville, NY. We are looking for the names and addresses of anyone who should be invited to this special renewal of friendships. Please help us locate your fellow classmates, teachers and friends, and be sure to mark this important date on your calendar.

Please send the names, addresses and phone numbers of anyone you might know to: **Evelyn Hamilton, P.O. Box 275, Williamsville, NY 14231-0275, or [ehamilton@osfwmsv.org](mailto:ehamilton@osfwmsv.org), or phone 716-632-2155 ext. 685.**

The Reunion promises to be an exciting and very meaningful event, so we hope you'll want to be a part of it in some special way. We really look forward to hearing from you!

The Sisters of St. Francis  
invite you to their Third Annual

### **Food & Wine Tasting**

Tuesday, May 3, 2005  
5:00 – 7:00 p.m.  
at

St. Mary of the Angels  
201 Reist Street  
Williamsville, New York

Sponsored by  
**Merrill Lynch**  
Burns/Kane/Fasanello Group

Fine Wine by  
**Georgetown Liquors**

**Silent & Live Auctions**  
\$35 per ticket

Please RSVP before May 1  
632-2155 ext. 687



## Generosity of 2004 Benefactors is Tremendous

Each year we look to the future full of hope because of the gifts we continue to receive from so many caring and compassionate individuals. We have been blessed by many friendships, and the willingness of people to play such a vital role in our lives truly strengthens our community, our ministries and our capacity to love and serve others.

In 2004, hundreds of individuals made financial gifts to our community. In fact our annual giving actually increased by 28%. We also noticed a significant increase in the number of donors, many people giving gifts for the very first time. Funds raised during the year will enable us to continue our important ministries, as well as care for our more elderly and infirm sisters who have spent their lives giving and caring for others.

We want to thank each and every one of you for your generosity. Within the next couple of months we will publish our 2004 Benefactor Appreciation Report, which will include the names of all our benefactors, unless you indicated that you would prefer to remain anonymous. Thank you again, and may God bless you for your generous support of our sisters, our community and all of the people we continue to serve.

# And The Two Shall Become One

by *Cindy Munschauer, Development Director*

In the Fall 2001 issue of GLEANINGS, we included an article about the need of our sisters ministering in Greenville, SC for a new car. The lease on their old car had expired, and they were in desperate need of funds to purchase a new one. Little did anyone realize that this request for funding would lead to a “match made in heaven”.

Soon after the article appeared, the sisters received a phone call from Ron Huefner, who had read the article. He was the cousin of Sister Mary Schifferle who was a teacher at St. Anthony’s School in Greenville, and he wanted to help. In fact, he wanted to help so much, that he insisted on funding the entire new car for our sisters. In deep gratitude, we ran another article in GLEANINGS, describing Ron’s incredible generosity of the car.

Many months later we learned that Marilyn Wolf, a widow with three grown children, had read the second car article in GLEANINGS, and realized that Ron was a lector at her church. Although she had never spoken to Ron, she marvelled at his kindness and generosity, and felt compelled to say something to him.

Without any real forethought, Marilyn literally ran up to Ron in church and said, “Ron, what a wonderful thing for you to have done!” Naturally he was surprised to have this lady whom he had never met run up to him like this. He composed himself for a minute and then said, “Pardon me, have we met?” When she realized that he really didn’t know who she was, she introduced herself.

Some time later, Ron called Marilyn and asked her if she would like to go to lunch with him. She was truly surprised, but agreed to join him. Subsequently they went out to lunch together quite often. They got to know each other better as time went on, and now they’re engaged!

“I truly feel that God had a definite hand in bringing us together,” says Marilyn. “I feel that it is most certainly God’s Will.” Ron and Marilyn plan to be married on May 20, 2005. Please keep them in your prayers for a long and happy marriage. Who knows, maybe they’ll send us a wedding picture!



## New Date and Location for Spaghetti Dinner!

Our 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Spaghetti Dinner will be held this year on Sunday, November 6<sup>th</sup>, from noon – 6:00 p.m. at the Main Transit Fire Hall on Main Street in Williamsville, NY. Although our past Spaghetti Dinners have been hugely successful, by changing the date and location we hope to be able to provide: better weather, ample parking and the ability to serve more people with no waiting time. So save the date, and bring your friends and family! Raffles, auctions and entertainment will again be provided.

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**Editor** Sr. Marcella Nachreiner  
**Photographers** Sr. Barbara Whelan & Barbara Kamrowski

# Quiet Moments with Francis

by Sr. Marcella Nachreiner

*a mini meditation*

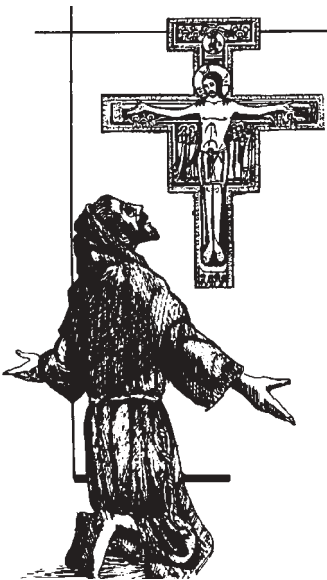
**W**e live in a complex, hectic, fast-paced world. One that is filled with violence, economic instability, decaying inner cities, racial bigotry, religious differences and war. Our world today isn't so terribly different from that of our holy Father Francis. History tells us that Francis' time was one in which the solidly structured feudal system was beginning to collapse, social upheaval was the norm of the day and economical revolutions and power struggles climaxed in skirmishes, conflict and war.

Life was hard for Francis. Each day presented new battles requiring fresh heroism. He spent his days, his life, struggling to overcome the conflicting forces within society and within himself. This daily struggle led him to acceptance of his own complexity and an alternative life-style for the people of his day. His life was a life of poverty and simplicity.

Francis' concept of poverty was radical. I doubt many of us can emulate him on this and actually divest ourselves of everything but the bare minimum of clothing. But what we can do is adopt a spirit of poverty which will allow us to be content with sufficiency rather than striving for superfluity.

Simplicity, on the other hand, is a much more profound concept than voluntary poverty. Simplicity not only reduces material possessions, it also diminishes the desire for them. Francis therefore, desired less and was happy with less. He was free — free of self-centered greed and free to love his neighbor.

Today, the culture of our lives blinds us to the precious simplicity that surrounds us and is within us. Too often, we become possessed and imprisoned by what we have accumulated or attained. We live in fear of their loss. This burden inhibits our freedom. What would it be like to live more simply? What would we have to change? We have within us the capacity to shape our lives. We can create complexity or simplicity, just as we can create hatred or love and harmony. What would it take to create a new life of simplicity which would hold others interests above our own self-interest?



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