



HEART TO HEART

A Newsletter of the SISTERS of ST. FRANCIS • Fall 2009

Devotion to Saint Francis of Assisi

O beloved Saint Francis, gentle and poor, your obedience to God and your simple, deep love for all God's creatures led you to the heights of heavenly perfection and turned many hearts to follow God's will. Intercede for us as we come before God with our special requests.

[Say your special intention.]

O blessed Saint of God, from your throne among the hosts of heaven present our petitions before our faithful Lord. May your prayers on our behalf be heard and may God grant us the grace to lead good and faithful lives. Amen.

Saint Francis of Assisi,
Pray for us. Amen.

"A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. Then, Jesus told his disciples: 'this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty.'"

Story of the Widow's Mite – Mk. 12:42-44



Dear Friends,

This story from the gospel of Mark reminds me of the generosity of all of you this past year of 2008. Even with a dreary financial picture in the U.S., you have given out of your need, and continue to support our efforts to assist those even more in need. Once again, we have met our development goal to be able to do that.

I recently made a visit to our mission in Peru, a dry, dusty climate where water is not always readily available to poor people. So many of the homes remain reed huts, which may become small adobe structures of one room, where an entire family lives. It reminded me how blest we are in a country of abundance where some help is usually available to all. We share that blessing with others when we support them with our prayers, as well as our "widow's mite".

As a congregation of women religious, another of our blessings this year is the religious profession of four women who have chosen to serve others in the Franciscan spirit. Blest also are we with two other women still in formation as well as three new candidates. Their entrance into religious life reminds me of the quote from the movie *The Field of Dreams*, "If you build it they will come." As Sisters of St. Francis of the Neumann Communities, we have continued to build not only our service to others, but also new membership in the community, enabling the spirit of St. Francis to continue outreach to those less fortunate than ourselves.

The prayers of our sisters sustain these efforts and help us to "keep on keeping on". They are also our humble return to you for your partnership in our ministries. You help us to build the kingdom of God here on earth. We are, indeed, grateful for your friendship and your support.

Peace & good,

Sister Marian Rose Mansius, OSF, Assistant General Minister



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Rooted in the Gospel and energized by the spirit of St. Francis and St. Clare, we seek to be women of vision living in right relationship with God, one another and with all creation.



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Information for comment or publication may be submitted by mail, FAX (315) 634-6973, or telephone (315) 634-7005 for the Development Director.

The 6th Annual Fairway to Heaven Golf Tournament was truly blessed again this year!

It's true that God answers all prayers. Sometimes the answer is “no,” which appeared to be the case regarding the weather on September 28, 2009, the day of the sixth annual Fairway to Heaven Golf Tournament held at Cavalry Club in Manlius, NY. Luckily, Sister EJ has celestial connections. While the weather was not picture-perfect she had lit enough candles to hold the rainy weather at bay for much of the day so that all players could get in 18 holes of golf!

In spite of the weather, Honorary Chair, Sister Elizabeth John (EJ) Timson, once again oversaw the noon-ish shotgun start and wished the golfers a heavenly round of golf. After play, golfers and guests enjoyed a delicious Surf and Turf combination cocktail reception and dinner.

Thanks to all those who participated – sponsors, donors, players, dinner guests, and ongoing supporters. Once again this year's tournament was sold out and was another wonderful success, raising over \$80,000 in profit for the Sisters of St. Francis in retirement.

Special thanks to Fairway to Heaven committee members who worked behind the scenes to make this tournament another triumph for the Sisters: Honorary Chair – Sr. Elizabeth John Timson, Chairperson – Michael Magley; Committee Members – Dr. Brian Anderson, John Bonura, Susan Clancy-Magley, Paul Drescher, Denise Hanlon, Ron Himberg, Sr. Mediatrix Hutchinson, Mark Kenville, Larry Lubber, Bill McAvoy, Myles McHale, Bill Murphy, Rev. Thomas Ryan, Frank Smith, Rob Toole, and Connie Whitton.



TO BENEFIT
THE SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS

Camp Alverna 2009

By Sister Margaret Patrick Fay

Once again a combination of good weather, enthusiastic adult and teen volunteers, and about 40 children made Camp Alverna a success. The day camp ran from August 10th through the 14th. The children coming from Brady Faith, St. Lucy's, St. Vincent's, and Dr. King elementary school enjoyed a week of sun and fun.

The Camp Alverna committee planned a week of varied activities for the children. The children took photos and later in the week made a photo journal. They had a lesson on vegetables and how they grew and ended with a sampling of veggies and dip. They learned about native and invasive ladybugs and were introduced to various musical instruments. They dug and panned for rocks and fossils, learned to clog dance, made music on African drums and instruments, brushed ponies, caught frogs, and swam. Some of the crafts they made included dream catchers, pillows, race cars and banners with Ghana symbols.

The kitchen crew cooked up wholesome and delicious breakfasts and lunches that were enjoyed by all each day. The children arrived at 9am, started the day with a song and recited our Covenant of Care. Divided into four groups, leaders and teens helped them with breakfast and then the activities began. The groups rotated through four different activities in the morning. After lunch there were special activities: Vanessa Johnson, the storyteller, Cynthia Paige's birds of prey, Town baseball, Rogers Environmental mammal presentation, and David Nyadedzor's African drumming.

The teens who volunteered from St. Mary's Minoa, CBA, and FM were a great help with all of the activities. They not only were group leaders, but also took an individual interest in the children and formed a special bond with them throughout the week. Without all the volunteers who gave endless energy and time and the donations from all our supporters, Camp Alverna would not be possible.



Help the Sisters of St. Francis through Planned Giving

Did you know that more than 80% of Americans contribute to the nonprofit groups of their choice throughout their lifetimes, but only 8% of people choose to contribute their support through planned giving? Including a charitable gift in your will or estate plan can help the Sisters of St. Francis who are in need of your financial assistance to continue their work well into the future.

By making a bequest or other "planned gift," you can continue to help the Sisters of St. Francis who are making a difference in our community. What better way to touch the future? Remembering the Sisters in your planning will allow you to incorporate your vision for a better world long after your lifetime. Through your help, the lives that are touched by your generosity can be part of your legacy.

Rest assured that gifts large or small are important. Charitable giving is not only for the wealthy! The Sisters of St. Francis are most grateful to all supporters!

For more information, contact Susan Clancy-Magley in the Development Office at 315.634.7026.



GIRLS CAMP 2009

By Sister Margaret Patrick Fay

Camp Alverna added a special two day girls' camp on August 19 and 20. This pilot program was for girls ages 12-14 who have aged out of Camp Alverna. A need was seen to have something positive for these girls who live in risk environments. Each girl was sent an invitation to come to camp, 12 responded. The committee consisting of Jean Gentilcore, Jeanne Anne Mader, Molly Gray, Sr. Caryn, and Sr. Margaret Patrick tried to come up with activities specifically designed for the girls.

The girls helped cook pancakes for breakfast, decorated baseball caps and sunglasses, painted jewelry boxes and with instruction from Jeanne Crème made beautiful necklaces and earrings. They were introduced to yoga, nia, and pilates. Mats were donated through the kindness of Karen Loeffler and Theresa Letcher. Twelve ladies from St. Mary's Church in Minoa gave a one on one hand waxing and manicure to each of the girls. In between all the activities the girls could be found having a grand time in the pool.

Funding for this program was through a Ministry fund grant from the Sisters of St. Francis. Because it was such a positive experience for both the staff and the girls we are considering continuing it in the future. We also see a need for a boy's camp ages 12-14, but more male volunteers would be needed.



Journeying Toward God

By Sisters Ann Kenyon and Donna Stephenson



L to R: S. Patricia Burkard witnesses S. Christine Steigerwald signing her commitment of Final Profession.

The month of August was a cause for great celebration among the Sisters of St. Francis of the Neumann Communities! Four women who have journeyed with us responded to God's call to live out their baptism in a deeper way by pronouncing vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. Sister Christine Steigerwald professed perpetual vows on August 9th at St. Mary of the Angels in Williamsville, NY. There was great jubilation as sisters, family and friends gathered to celebrate with

her. The spirit of community was deeply felt by all who were present.

The celebration continued on August 15th as Sister Sylvia Tullius professed perpetual vows and Sisters Amy Williams and Laura Hackenberg professed temporary vows at Mt. Alvernia in Millvale, PA. It was inspiring to hear these women pronounce vows as Sisters of St. Francis, knowing that they will help to carry our Franciscan charism into the future. Sisters traveled from far and near to witness and support our women in initial formation. The celebrations were enriched by many people generously sharing their gifts in areas such as hospitality, music, dance and proclaiming the Word. It was truly a community celebration! We thank God for all the ways that he has blessed us and allowed us to continue to serve others in his name.

LtoR: Sisters Sylvia Tullius, Patricia Burkard, Laura Hackenberg, Amy Williams.



Bishop Cunningham visits Blessed Marianne Shrine

On April 26th, following the announcement that our new bishop would be Bishop Robert Cunningham, he made a visit to St. Anthony Convent Chapel to visit the remains of Blessed Marianne Cope. He was welcomed by many of our sisters. Sister Patricia Burkard, our general minister, and Sister Mary Laurence Hanley, postulator for the Cause of Blessed Marianne, presented him with a biography of Blessed Marianne's life. The Bishop addressed the sisters assembled and thanked them for their outstanding contributions in serving the needs of the church and society.

Bishop Cunningham is a native of Buffalo and is known by our sisters who work in that region. We were honored by his presence and know that he will be a staunch supporter of the cause of Blessed Marianne as we zealously work toward her canonization to take place.

In Memoriam

Sister David Agnes DeForest
September 14, 2009

St. Joseph Hospital Anniversary Celebration

By Sister Rose Ann Renna

Hundreds of employees, staff, volunteers and sisters

affiliated with St. Joseph Hospital and Health Center participated in the 140th anniversary ceremony of St. Joseph Hospital Health Center. The event was especially noteworthy because the newly articulated mission statement of the hospital was unveiled. Tying together the significance of the mission statement with the 140th anniversary was our own Mother Marianne (in the person of Sister Kathleen Osbelt). All were reminded that, in fact, our mission has not changed and through these 140 continuous years we have had giants following giants who and have believed in and practiced our mission.

We have gone from an 83 word mission statement to a 14 word mission statement. The new statement and values were only completed after a process involving about 1,000 staff in examining who we are, were and believe we should be. Our new statement is compelling and has already ignited great enthusiasm.

Our Mission Statement:

We are
passionate
healers dedicated to
honoring the Sacred
in our sisters and
brothers.

Our Core Values

In the spirit of good STEWARDSHIP, we heal by practicing COMPASSION through our kindness, concern and genuine caring; REVERENCE in honoring the dignity of the human spirit; EXCELLENCE by expecting the best of ourselves and others; INTEGRITY by being and speaking the truth.





Our Work ~ Our Ministries

The fundamental spirit of any Franciscan Community is the living of the evangelical or Gospel life. Rooted in the spirits of Saints Francis and Clare, we are called to be brother and sister to one another in community under the parenthood of God.

Our ministry flows from this communal life and from our life of prayer, and impels us to reach out to all persons in all places at all times to meet whatever need is there - this is our encompassing sense of mission. Specifically, our ministries within the Church include education, health

care, social services, pastoral and spiritual care - always with an awareness of and an openness to new and evolving ministries.

Core values of Franciscan life focus our efforts in a more

intense way to model justice, peacemaking and care of the earth and all life within. We strive to incorporate these values in our ministries in a variety of ways. Our infirm and retired sisters minister through their prayers and by their spirit of acceptance, serenity, penance and peace. Our members in missionary lands give testimony to the presence of God's love within the cultures of the people with whom and for whom they serve. Always we seek to have each sister serve in a ministry compatible with our Franciscan Spirit and mission.

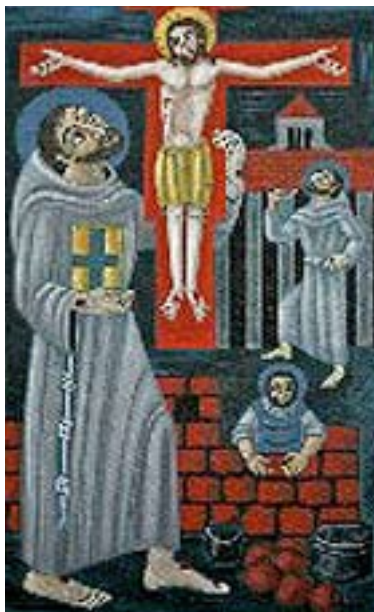
As Sisters of St. Francis of the Neumann Communities we are blessed by the Lord with the charism of St. Francis and St. Clare. In joy and peace we invite our lay sisters and brothers to journey with us in our Associate Program.

Because of our Baptism we share the "Universal call to holiness" (Lumen Gentium) and the mission to make holy our times, our world and our relationship. Faithful to the origins of the Third Order as a lay movement in the thirteenth century, the Associate Program allows the Sisters to share their Franciscan charism and values with and within the church as the Sisters and Associates journey together in faith.

It is our hope that the people of God, lay and religious, will find opportunities together to deepen our faith, our awareness of God's love for us, and experience the spirit and power of God within us to proclaim the gospel through our lives.

"This is what I want. This is what I seek. This is what I long to do with all my heart."

St. Francis of Assisi



Francis House
Home for the terminally ill
108 Michaels Street
Syracuse, NY 13208
315-475-5422
www.francishouseny.org

NunBetter Chocolate Store
1118 Court Street Suite 43
Syracuse, NY 13208
315-701-0920
www.nunbetter.org

St. Elizabeth Medical Center
2209 Genesee Street
Utica, NY 13501
315-734-3424
www.stemc.org

St. Francis Adult Day Care Center
1108 Court Street
Syracuse, NY 13208
315-424-1003
www.mwtsd.com

St. Joseph Hospital Health Center
301 Prospect Avenue
Syracuse, NY 13203
(315) 448-5111
www.sjhsyr.org

Stella Maris Retreat Center
130 East Genesee Street
Skaneateles, NY 13152
315-685-6836
www.stellamarisretreat.org

The Gingerbread House Preschool
and Daycare Center
2500 Grant Boulevard
Syracuse, NY 13208
315-471-4198
www.thegingerbreadhouseofsyracuse.com

Pen & Pages
Franciscan Tutorial Center
1118 Court Street
Syracuse, NY 13208
315-478-1217

Mercy Health & Rehabilitation Center
3 St. Anthony St
Auburn, NY 13021-4525
www.mercyrehab.net



Our Spiritual Roots:

The Third Order

Although Francis died in 1126 and Clare died twenty-seven years later, new life continues to grow from their Spirituality. It has spread from one person to

another down through the centuries. Even as Francis started to have followers who left their homes to become Friars, many people living in the towns also wanted to follow his way of life. Because of their business and/or family commitments they were unable to travel around as the friars did or become cloistered as in Clare's case. Francis wrote a, "Letter to all the Faithful" that became a guide for those who lived in their own homes. They met together from time to time to pray or have instruction from one of the Friars.

Later some gathered in small communities and developed a life of devotion and fellowship while going out each day to their various occupations. Others who were unmarried and had no dependents gave up their possessions to become hermits or recluses. By the end of

the thirteenth century, some of the groups developed into communities of Religious who bound themselves by vows.

In the Fifteenth Century a permanent division was made in the Third Order to accommodate all these lifestyles. The Third Order Secular Franciscans continue to flourish among the laity living at home. Groups who take vows and live in communities either contemplative or devoted to works of mercy, follow the Third Order Regular Rule.

In the history of the Sisters of St. Francis, Anna Dorn who later became Mother Bernadina Dorn, one of the original founders of this Community, was a novice in the Third Order Secular Franciscans in her home town of Gasseldorf, Bavaria. She brought a Third Order Rule Book with her when she immigrated to the United States. In Philadelphia she met Anna Bachman and Barbara Boll who also liked the Franciscan Spirituality it expressed and agreed to follow this Rule as the basis of the Religious Community that they asked Bishop Neuman to found.

To read more Our Spiritual Roots visit us at our Web site: www.sosf.org

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