



Franciscan Gleanings

VOLUME XXIII, NUMBER II WINTER 2011

150 Years of Service in the Diocese of Buffalo

1861 – 2011

We Remember.
We Celebrate.
We Give Thanks.

*By Sister Kathleen Murphy, OSF
Chairperson, 150th Anniversary Committee*

Our keen memories of the stories regarding the early history of our community recall that several sisters left the original Philadelphia congregation to begin a mission in Buffalo in December of 1861 with only seventy-five cents. When the sisters arrive at the Buffalo depot they gave fifty cents to the porter to transport their trunks to Pine Street. Thus, with twenty-five cents, and much trust in God, we began serving the needs of others through education, health care, care of the elderly and orphans, all of which led us in the course of time to parish ministries, social ministries, foreign missions, service to immigrants and refugees, retreat work and spiritual direction and whatever else might be the needs of the people of God.



Our sisters cared and nurtured the children at the German Roman Catholic Orphanage on Dodge Street in Buffalo, dating back to 1874.

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150 Years of Service

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In December 1861, Sister Mary Margaret Boll led a small group of sisters to Buffalo.



Our sisters began the practice of Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration in 1902. Today our sisters continue Daily Adoration for the needs of the people of Western New York and beyond.

In 1902, forty-one years after our coming to Buffalo, we were gifted at our Pine Street motherhouse with Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. We carried the gift of Eucharistic Adoration to our Mill Street motherhouse at the time of its foundation in 1928, and then to our new St. Mary of the Angels on Reist Street in 1999. We remember this great gift, we celebrate it, and we give thanks!



Our sisters built our first motherhouse on Pine Street near Broadway in downtown Buffalo in 1882.

Our Buffalo congregation flourished and expanded through the 60s and 70s and as times changed, our ministries changed too. Our Franciscan values and mission, however, have remained the same and have guided us to build on our history and move into the future.

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*Moving forward – creating our future
with a greater sense of “oneness”
even as we serve in a variety of global ministries.*

Dear Friends,

Since 2004 our congregation has undergone many changes. Some have been visible to you such as our new logo and new name; others are not quite as visible. Who we are today happened when three independent congregations in Syracuse, Williamsville and Hastings-on-Hudson, New York, came together to form a new union known as the Sisters of St. Francis of the Neumann Communities. During that same time, the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Divine Child merged with the congregation in Williamsville and subsequently became part of the new union. In 2007, the Sisters of St. Francis in Pittsburgh merged into this newly formed congregation. Historically, the three congregations in New York and the one in Pennsylvania have the same foundation and we all share a common Franciscan heritage.

From our individual congregations of origin we have shared with you the good news about our life and ministries through our newsletter, “Gleanings.” You in turn have been generous in your support of our ministries throughout the years. For this we are most grateful.

Now as one congregation we are moving forward in creating our future with a greater sense of “oneness” even as we serve in a variety of ministries across the continental United States, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Peru and Africa. We continue to build our common heart as a congregation and want to share that spirit of oneness with you. To help us achieve this



we are moving toward one congregational newsletter rather than the individual publications you have been receiving coming from our regions. Therefore, this issue of “Gleanings” is the last issue you will receive by this name. In spring of 2011 you will receive our new newsletter, having a new name, a new look and with good news from throughout the congregation. You will be able to get to know more of us and our ministries. We look forward to your continued friendship and support.

Peace and Blessings!

Sister Patricia Burkard OSF

Sister Patricia Burkard OSF
General Minister



150 Years of Service

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From 1999 through 2004 three congregations (Buffalo, Syracuse, Hastings-on-Hudson) that grew out of the same Philadelphia order and were severed due to circumstances of the day and church rules, formed a new community known as Sisters of St. Francis of the Neumann Communities.

In 2003, the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Divine Child merged with the Buffalo group. In 2007, sisters who had left Buffalo early in our history to found a mission in Pittsburgh, and eventually became an autonomous group, merged with us, bringing one more congregation



In 1907, our sisters founded St. Mary's Hospital in Lewiston, NY, and through the years several hospitals flourished under the leadership of our sisters.

into the fold. Memories of these happenings are still fresh in our minds, and for them we celebrate and give thanks!

With continued trust in God, and the prayerful and financial support of our benefactors, we celebrate 150

years of presence and ministry in Western New York and beyond. 2011 will be a year to remember, celebrate and give thanks to all those past and present whose faith and support have enabled us to retain our rich tradition of the past and blend it with today's needs in the spirit of St. Francis.



By the mid 20th century, our sisters taught in elementary and high schools in the United States and Puerto Rico. They continue this important ministry of education today in schools throughout Western New York, and as far away as Kenya, East Africa.

CALENDAR *of 150th Anniversary Events*

Please join us in our celebration.

JANUARY 8

St. John Neumann celebration for sisters and associates at St. Mary of the Angels

MARCH 19

Lenten retreat day at St. Mary of the Angels with Father Michael J. Margliano, OFM

APRIL 2

Lecture “Meeting Francis and Clare: Franciscan Guides in a Tough Economy” by Sister Margaret Carney, OSF STD, President of St. Bonaventure University, at St. Mary’s Church in Swormville, NY

MAY 3

Food and Wine Tasting at St. Mary of the Angels

MAY 30

Memorial Day – remembrance of our deceased sisters at our Gethsemane Cemetery on the grounds of St. Mary of the Angels

JULY 12

Williamsville Old Home Days Parade – Main Street, Williamsville

AUGUST 6

Homecoming Event for sisters and former members at St. Mary of the Angels

SEPTEMBER 17

Benefactor Appreciation Day at St. Mary of the Angels

OCTOBER 1

Jubilee Day for Sisters

OCTOBER 10

Amherst State Park Event at Amherst State Park

OCTOBER 16

Annual Spaghetti Dinner, Our Lady of Peace in Clarence, NY

DECEMBER 18

Closing liturgy at St. Joseph’s Cathedral, Buffalo, with a banquet to follow at the Adam’s Mark Hotel



The Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Divine Child began catechetical work in the Buffalo area in 1927. In 2003, they merged with our Williamsville Franciscan Sisters, and all joined the Union with Syracuse and Hastings-on-Hudson to form the Sisters of St. Francis of the Neumann Communities. Later the Millvale, PA sisters, and some Whitehall, PA sisters joined the community.

In Gratitude

“Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow.”

- MELODY BEATTIE



For 150 years we have ministered throughout the Diocese of Buffalo. We have continually responded to the needs of others while, at the same time, we have cared for our own elderly and infirm sisters, who for decades gave so freely of themselves in service to others.

As Franciscan women religious, we have a “vision for tomorrow”, one that weaves our common heart with that of our sisters in Syracuse, Hastings-on-Hudson and Pittsburgh. Our mission world now includes Kenya, Peru and Molokai, Hawaii, where our sisters minister to leprosy patients.

Hospice care of the dying, day care of children, as well as our efforts of justice for those marginalized in society, are all broadening.

We have been able to expand our efforts in education, healthcare and social work. We are now in a position to better nurture families in need of support through outreach and counseling, care for the elderly and, of course, our prayer relationships and pastoral ministries. Our ministries, old and new, are possible because of the compassionate and generous hearts of many.

As we begin 2011, we would like to thank all of you who gave so generously to our congregation. Funding for our ministries comes primarily from private contributions, so every gift received is very much appreciated, and helps us to continue our important ministries.

We would never be able to accomplish much of what we do if we did not have your compassionate support. Thank you for reaching out to us with your prayers, financial gifts and friendship. Your kindness has made a profound difference in the lives of many, including our own. Our ministries will continue well into the future with a strong “vision of tomorrow” thanks to your compassionate hearts.

God bless you for your generosity. May peace, joy and good health be yours throughout the coming year.

Sister Kathleen Murphy, Spiritual Director/Retreat Facilitator

“After many years in the ministry of Catholic education, I find new energy in my ministry of spiritual direction, through which I accompany others as they listen and respond to the Spirit of God working within them.”





Sister Ellen McClure, Vice President of Mission Integration with President and CEO, James Millard, at Kenmore Mercy Hospital in Kenmore, NY

“I am truly blessed to be able to put mission into practice in concrete ways to help people who are in pain and distress. Helping and comforting others is very rewarding.”

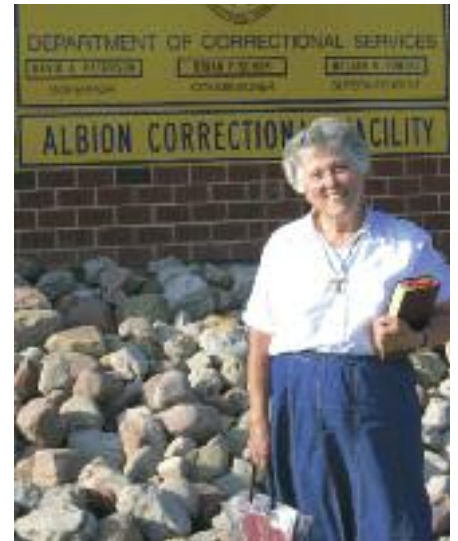


Sister Patricia Marie Hartley, Director of Spiritual Care at Our Lady of Peace Nursing Residence in Lewiston, NY with Stanley Klizek

“We have so many lonely people here. I am greatly rewarded when their eyes light up when I bring them the Holy Eucharist and spend quality time with them.”

Sister Teresita Richardson at the Albion Correctional Facility in Albion, NY as part of the Kairos Prison Ministry – Changing Hearts, Changing Lives, Impacting the World

“Kairos Prison Ministry is a great opportunity to see and experience Jesus setting the captives free. The women are thereby opened to love, forgiveness and go on to build a safe community, sharing the Word and life on a regular basis. They lift me up by the growth and depth of their spirituality and the way they sincerely evangelize one another.”



Sister Patricia Griffin, Retired Teacher from Ss. Peter & Paul School in Williamsville, NY, recently rejoined students from the school in a “Celebration of Life”.

“As a teacher, I hopefully always helped the children to become better citizens with good moral values. I love it because I was able to watch them continually grow spiritually, physically, psychologically and academically.”



Grateful to Our 2010 Jubilarians



Sister Mary Veronica
Del Vecchio – 75 Years

My Jubilee meant to me that it brought me closer to God. It was wonderful to celebrate this beautiful event with my family, friends and community.

*Women of vision
rooted in the Gospel
Energized by the
spirit of St. Francis
and St. Clare*

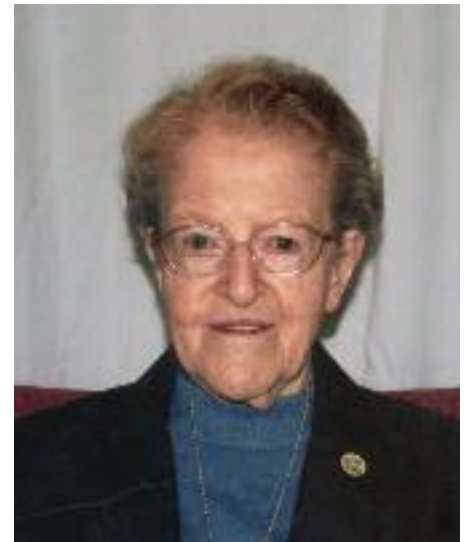


Sister Marie Dorothy Clitheroe

(below) – 60 Years

(Sister Marie Dorothy embraced sister death on November 20, 2010)

My Jubilee was the most beautiful event of my life. Everything was just perfect, the choir was beautiful – perfect! The chapel was filled with friends and family. The music was heavenly. People commented on the beauty of the music, and I was delighted.



Sister Margaret Mary Foley *(above)*

– 60 Years

My Jubilee was glorious – the greatest day of my life! It was a lasting memory for seven Jubilarians, our families, friends and our own sisters. We each spoke our joys to God for His gift of love and Holy Vocation and pray to continue being His Instrument to all. My Jubilee was the greatest gift of all from God – a time of sharing 60 years of love, fun and my life with the sisters – receiving their love.



Sister M. Wilma Holler *(above)*

– 70 Years

Words can say so little when love is so deep. My 70th Jubilee in Religious Life has been a time to reflect and look back to the day of my entrance. How fortunate I am to have been chosen by Him to live a Spiritual Life. I am thankful for the many years I have had to grow in love for Him. This was made possible by the many opportunities that were given to me by our loving community. Jubilee Day was certainly a “Magnificat” celebration.



Sister Joanne Gangloff

– 50 Years

Jubilee 2010 is probably the most significant event of my life to date. The loving presence of so many sisters and family and friends from far and near have brought together in time and space many wonderful quality events and get-togethers. Faith and friendship and reconnecting all provide the fuel for renewing efforts. As St. Paul says: “Let us begin anew, for up to now we have done nothing.” To me Jubilee means celebrating all that has been, and going forth towards what is yet to come, renewed in spirit.



Sister Mary Jane Reisdorf

– 50 Years

The celebration of my 50 year Jubilee has brought me joy and blessings I had never imagined. Our Extravagant God has poured on us more love and happiness than anybody could have prayed for, together with assurance of faithful presence in our lives with the graces and strengths we need in times of trials and suffering, as well as times of joy. The Liturgy and the entire day were a full overflowing measure of Jubilee. The very word means so much more now. “For all that has been, thanks! For all that will be, Yes!” – Dag Hamorschold



Sister Margaret Toohill

– 50 Years

It gave me a time and means to reflect on God’s enduring generous love in my life ... and celebrate it! I am forever grateful for our Franciscan life and all that has come to light regarding what this tradition means in this our times. Jubilee also brought together so many people that have touched my life with their goodness – either physically or etched deeply in my heart. God is good!



Very Special Events!



Food and Wine Tasting

On May 4, 2010 over 200 people gathered for our annual Food & Wine Tasting. Jim and Bonnie Sexton chaired this special event this year, and almost \$32,000 was raised thanks to everyone's generous efforts. Once again, Georgetown Square Wine & Liquor provided all of the wine. Thom Diina and Ray Chamberlain entertained everyone with their fine music, and Cash Cunningham served as our auctioneer. Many thanks to everyone for making this very popular event so successful.

above:

Food & Wine Tasting Chairs, Bonnie & Jim Sexton, visited with Jim's former principal, Sister Juliana Deinhart, prior to the event.

right:

Richard & Linda Shick and daughter, Christa Blain, were all smiles, and helped tremendously in securing major gifts for this special event.





Bishop Neumann High School Reunion

St. Mary of the Angels was the location of this year's Bishop Neumann High School Reunion. On August 14, 2010 over 300 alumni, who shared a rich history at the school with our sisters, gathered together to spend quality time and share memories with one another. Some people traveled to Williamsville from around the country, and it was truly a wonderful time, filled with much joy and laughter. This is the second time our sisters have hosted Bishop Neumann alumni, and we look forward to the next time that we can all get together again!

above: General Minister & alumna, Sister Patricia Burkard, spends time with fellow alumnae."



left: Sister Bernice Zieminski looks through yearbooks with her brother, Frank Zieminski, and Estelle Halicki.

Spaghetti Dinner

Our Lady Of Peace R.C. Church in Clarence, NY was once again the location for this year's Spaghetti Dinner. Almost 1,000 people came to share in the fun and gobble up delicious spaghetti & meatballs. There was also our very popular "Nun-Sweeter" Bake Sale, Theme Basket Auction, delicious desserts, and so much more. The fellowship that was enjoyed was priceless and, in the end, \$15,500 was raised for our important ministries – by far the most successful Spaghetti Dinner to date. Thanks everyone!

above: Jerry Gentile, Spaghetti Dinner chair, congratulates Suzan Tully, who won one of the hourly Francesco Rinaldi door prizes.

right: Youth from schools and parishes throughout Western New York volunteered to help serve hundreds of spaghetti dinners to the generous people who supported this event.



Sisters of St. Francis are Honored

2010 Franciscan Federation Annual Conference

The theme of the 2010 Franciscan Federation Annual Conference, “Passionately Embracing Gospel Living,” was aptly demonstrated by keynote presenters, Brother Bill Short OFM and Sister Claire Andre, OSC. Brother Bill is a well-known professor of spirituality from the Franciscan School of Theology in Berkeley, CA. Sister Claire is a Poor Clare of Chesterfield, NJ.

The informal stage arrangement of the two presenters sitting in arm chairs turned toward each other, together with their dialogue/storytelling style, created an ambiance of intimacy and

spiritual conversation rather than a formal, developed presentation. One attendee described her experience this way: “I didn’t take one note. It was heart-to-heart, rather than head-to-head.”

At the banquet recognition dinner, congregations honored sisters and brothers who are a beacon of light for others, especially the marginalized, who witness to the challenge and power of gospel values in daily living. They live in a way that speaks of the importance of “being and presence”, not solely on “doing.”

Our own Sister Frances Clare DeGracia was one of the honorees at the dinner. She has passionately served the most vulnerable populations of Peru for over 40 years. She is currently in mission south of Lima in Quebrada Verde, Peru where 99% of home have no running water or bathrooms, and most consist of reed mats or adobe with dirt floors. Looking to the future and the potential of the youth there, she has raised funds for, and has established, the Santa Rosa de Lima Montessori School. She is also trying to develop a small bakery that will provide a way to sustain the school.



Twenty-four Neumann Franciscan Sisters attended the conference. Sister Francis Clare DeGarcia is seated in the middle of the front row.

This beautiful tapestry, created by Sister Rose Raymond Wagner, depicts the official conference logo, and was used as part of the opening ritual.





Food Shuttle of Western New York

On October 16, 2010, Sister Marcia Klawon, representing our sisters, accepted a Certificate of Special Recognition from the Food Shuttle of Western New York. Our sisters were recognized for 15 years of dedicated service to the Food Shuttle.

The Food Shuttle of WNY was organized to help alleviate hunger in

our community. It is an all-volunteer program that serves as a link between the sources of surplus food and the locations where it is needed most.

photo: Sister Marcia Klawon (center) accepts the Certificate of Special Recognition along with Sisters Juliana Whitefield and Teresita Richardson.



Curé of Ars Award Dinner

The annual Curé of Ars Award Dinner, held on October 19, 2010 in Buffalo, NY, honored women religious in the Diocese of Buffalo. This event was established by Christ the King Seminary's board of trustees in 1985 as a fundraiser for the seminary. In addition, it is a way of honoring individuals and organizations whose lives reflect the qualities of Christian dedication and service that marked the life of St. John Vianney.

Our congregation is among the 22 congregations ministering in the Diocese of Buffalo who were recognized at the dinner. A citation noting the legacy of women religious in education, health care, ministry to the marginalized, service to the elderly and pastoral contributions was presented to each congregation. The prolonged standing ovation was an indication of the gratitude expressed to the sisters.

Sister Dolores Cook, Joyce Fink and Sister Pat Burkard enjoy a special moment at the Curé of Ars Awards Dinner.

We Remember



Sister Stella Marie Alessi

December 25, 1918 – August 14, 2010

Born Therese Alessi in Anita, Pennsylvania to parents who were from Sicily, Sister Stella Marie grew up in a coal mining area of Western Pennsylvania. Her parents were blessed with six children but, unfortunately, God claimed her mother's life when she was just seven-months-old. Fortunately, her father remarried and was blessed with another six children, which left Sister Stella Marie in the middle.

After graduating from St. Mary's Elementary School and Commercial School, through the grace of God and the help of a dear friend and teacher, Sister Stella Marie became a Sisters of St. Francis for over 74 years, and a primary teacher for over 55 years.

Although short of stature, she was deeply grounded in her call to be a Franciscan woman religious. There were many ways she was faithful, including walking humbly with God. Whether she was teaching little children, working with her sister, Sister St. Ann, in the kitchen, crocheting in the health center or praying before the Blessed Sacrament for her Holy Hour, she was God's "little one", but she was definitely not little of heart. She was faithful in her ministry, warm and loving in her sharing with all of us, and always rooted with faith and trust in her good and gracious God. Her prayer was her bedrock of life. God was her true focus.



Sister Marie Dorothy Clitheroe

July 29, 1925 – November 20, 2010

Born Irene Clitheroe in Hamilton, Ontario in Canada, Sister Marie Dorothy attended school in Buffalo and graduated from St. Nicholas Academy, and in 1950 entered the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Divine Child (FMDC). In 2003, she became a Sister of St. Francis of the Third Order Regular of Buffalo when her order merged with our order.

Sister Marie Dorothy earned her Bachelor's Degree in Education from Medaille College and her Master's Degree from Canisius College. An educator for over 40 years, she also served on the Board of Catholic Education for the Diocese of Buffalo, helping them to further develop their religious education program. She was also on the FMDC Leadership Council, and served as General Minister. Later she worked with McAuley-Seton Home Care.

Sister Marie Dorothy had priorities: She loved her God, her family, community, education, sports and pets. Her heart rate may not have been strong, but her heart rate of love was over the top. She was a very generous and grateful person. This wonderful Franciscan woman of prayer completed her work on earth in November, when she was called home to the One to whom she dedicated her life. May she rest in peace.

SISTERS of ST. FRANCIS

PATH OF LIFE

Throughout our lives, we are deeply influenced by the people we have loved. Whether it be family members, friends or those who have embraced us in some significant way, our lives are indeed reflections of those we have loved, and those who have loved us.

The Sisters of St. Francis invite you to honor the special people in your life.



Situated next to our motherhouse in Williamsville, NY, is our peaceful St. Francis Lake. It is a place of beauty and serenity, and a haven for personal prayer. Included in the path is our Marian Shrine. Benches for prayer and personal reflection are also available.

In 2008 we surrounded St. Francis Lake with our constructed Path of Life - a path that celebrates the lives of the people who have touched our lives. We invite you to purchase an engraved brick or paver that will be included in this special pathway. They may be dedicated in memory or in honor of specific individuals, or to commemorate special occasions. Each brick/paver serves as a lasting tribute to remarkable people, and their lives.

As you walk the path, you can read the names of people permanently etched in brick. Years from now, as people visit the path, they will see the incredible support of those who believed in our sisters and our important ministries. These are the people who helped us create our Path of Life.

Would you like to purchase a brick/paver to honor an individual for a holiday gift or birthday?

We would be happy to send an acknowledgement card to let your special someone know that you have inscribed their name in our Path of Life - a gift that will last forever. We will also send a photo of their brick/paver for them to keep.

Bricks and pavers are engraved several times a year.

Next engraving: April 2011

To order a brick or paver, contact Cindy Munschauer

716-632-2155 EXT 687 | cmunschauer@sosf.org



Examples:

In Memory of
Mary Smith
1921 - 2002

John Doe
ABC High School
Class of 1975

Donated by
ABC Company

In Honor of
Sister Mary Jones

Mary Smith
Tampa, FL

*You show me the path of life;
Your presence fills me
with joy, and by your side I find
enduring pleasure.*

— PSALM 16, V. II

PATH OF LIFE – Our new “Path of Life” is an on-going project. We will be accepting orders for bricks and pavers for many years to come.

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



quiet moments *with* FRANCIS

January is fast approaching and conversations will soon be turning toward resolutions. Resolutions are often very difficult to carry out successfully, mainly because after the first exhilarating days it is difficult to feel enthusiastic about them. This year, having thought and prayed over what resolution could help me become a more Christ-centered individual, I realized my need to put more of my contemplation into action. Although I know that my actions are always to be acts of peace and love, I sometimes struggle with what action is best in some difficult situations (what is it that I'm to do?). However, I realize the reason is that I haven't spent enough time listening in order to find out what God wants me to do. Our holy father Francis spent half of his life in prayer, in order to find out what he should do. He left the busy, noisy marketplace and ascended mountains in search of silence and solitude, where he could hear the voice of God by deepening the vast reservoir of his prayer life. "I have done what is mine to do", Francis said, "Pray that God shows you what is yours to do."

Francis was unique. He was a mystic and a man of action. His actions flowed out of his contemplation. The word "contemplation" actually means to witness and respond. Thomas Merton reminds us that "the secret of contemplation is the gift of ourselves to God." When we give ourselves to God in prayer, we begin to experience the richness of divine love and mercy and we are better able to share that love and mercy with others.

In prayer, Francis was freed from the complexities of thought (figuring out what to do) and he discovered the simplicity of his own heart. For me, the point is, only through prayer will I find "what is mine to do."

As I pray for the grace to enthusiastically live out my "New Year's Resolution", I pray that you too will look to Jesus, ask for direction and hear the call to do "what is yours to do."

Happy New Year!

Sr. Marcella Nachreiner, OSF
DECEMBER 2010

