

REFLECTIONS

&
Connections

AUGUST 2016



2016 CSA ASSOCIATE AND SISTER JUBILARIANS

*For names and years of our
2016 Jubilarians, please see
page 8.*

STORIES OF MISSION
& MINISTRY



CSA

Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes
Promoting Justice, Building Community

Dear Friends,



Once again we are privileged to celebrate the years our CSA Sisters have been in service to and with God's people. We give thanks for our 2016 Jubilarians, especially for graces given and received. Our longest serving celebrants are marking 75 years of vowed life, followed by those celebrating 70, 60, 50, 40 and 25 years of vowed life. Among our associates, we celebrate 40, 25 and 15 years of relationship. The legacy of loving service is one we treasure.

Another jubilee important to CSA is one that was held in Johnsburg on June 18, 2016. The parish of St. John the Baptist celebrates 175 years. Father Caspar Rehrl, named the first resident pastor of St. John's in 1845, is known for his missionary zeal. Father Rehrl travelled on foot through the Wisconsin wilderness to serve the German immigrants. One of the communities he visited was the small community of German settlers established in 1841 and eventually named Johnsburg. He lived with families of the parish until a log cabin church was erected. Over the years he personally founded 15 parishes and, in 1858, the Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes.

On June 18, Sister Jomarie Zielke, CSA, Jenny Lukomski, CSA Archivist, and I gathered with parishioners to celebrate a shared legacy of mission and ministry in rural Fond du Lac County. Festivities began with a 3 p.m. prayer service at the original parish site where the church, cemetery and school once stood. Following this, all gathered at the current parish church for a Mass presided over by Archbishop Jerome ListECKI at 4:15 p.m. and a blessing of the new cemetery's crucifixion scene.

We from CSA brought with us the chalice in its fragile leather case used by Father Rehrl on his missionary journeys. This chalice, available for Archbishop ListECKI's use in the 175th anniversary liturgy, was accompanied with Father Rehrl's small ciborium, two of his published theological books, and several of his hand-written "chap books" from our CSA archives.

Though our founder Father Rehrl died in 1881, his legacy lives on in the minds and hearts of the descendants of those with whom he ministered so faithfully. As we celebrate our CSA jubilarians of 2016, we remember Father Rehrl and all those parishes and people he served. His legacy and ours are bound together in the mission that continues to call us to respond in our own times to those whose faith life or human dignity is threatened.

In the peace and love of Christ,
Sister Jean Steffes, CSA
General Superior

Contents



- 3 Committed to Care for Earth
- 4 A Future Full of Hope
- 5 In Memoriam...Walking with God
- 5 Honoring our Elders
- 6 Extending the Mission
- 6 CSA Summer Days
- 7 Young at Heart
- 7 New Archivist at St. Agnes Convent
- 8 Fall Program Offerings
- 8 On the Cover

Committed to Care for Earth

BY SISTER SALLY ANN BRICKNER, OSF
COORDINATOR OF JUSTICE, PEACE AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION

“Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home... Truly, much can be done!”

— Pope Francis, “Laudato Si”

As a youth, Saturday was my least favorite day of the week. It meant that school was not in session and that I would have to help with housekeeping. Ugh! I hated mopping and dusting rather than reading and writing! As I matured, however, I came to appreciate the importance of clean living spaces and weed-free gardens. I also learned that reducing clutter made it much easier to keep up a household.

Typically, we devote many hours to keeping up our homes and yards. But do we think beyond our personal spaces and consider that planet Earth is our home and also requires attention? In his encyclical “Laudato Si” Pope Francis urgently appealed to the world that all humanity must care for Earth, its common home.

In this endeavor, women religious have been leaders rather than followers. In her 2009 book, *Green Sisters*, Sarah McFarland Taylor provided many examples of Catholic sisters forging a path toward more sustainable living. The Sisters of St. Agnes have been part of that movement. In May 2016 they voted overwhelmingly to renew and recommit to care for Earth both as a Congregation and individually. Love for the Author of creation and the interdependence of all life is at the heart of their commitment to preserve and protect Earth. The sisters know that living more sustainably will demand difficult choices every day, but they are determined to work together to care for Earth which God has entrusted to humankind.

Corporate Stance

In light of the growing impact of climate change on the global community, we, the Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes, honoring our interdependence with all of God’s creation and in a spirit of nonviolence, personally and communally renew and recommit to care for Earth, home of all living creatures.



L to R: Sister Rose Walters, Sister Ruth Battaglia and Fond du Lac Associate Mary Gorske at the Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation meeting, counting ballots for the CSA Corporate Stance: Care of Earth.



L to R: Carrie Leehan, RN, with patient

A Future Full of Hope

BY SISTER MARY NOEL BROWN, CSA
EXECUTIVE LEADER OF SPONSORSHIP

“In every human situation ... the Good News is no mere matter of words, but a testimony to unconditional and faithful love: it is about leaving ourselves behind and encountering others... sharing with the needy, standing at the side of the sick, elderly and the outcast.”

— Pope Francis, 2014 Easter Message

These inspirational words of Pope Francis reflect a new way of “standing at the side of the sick” at Monroe Clinic. Historically, financial counselors approved people with limited financial means for community care, a program of financial assistance for people in need. Under this model, high acuity needs were being met, while basic health and wellness needs were addressed less frequently.

Enter an interdisciplinary team who saw the necessity to leave their old model behind. They envisioned a more comprehensive way of meeting the needs of those in poverty. The redesigned community care program is built on a long-standing goal of Monroe Clinic to promote wellness for all persons they serve.

All who qualify for community care are referred to a primary care provider, have a baseline wellness examination within 60 days that is 100% covered, have access to preventive services, and are referred to specialists in a more timely manner.

Population health specialist Carrie Leehan, RN, praised the success of the program. “Patients are given hope for a better future. Their relief is palpable on learning that the cost of the wellness exam and necessary follow-up care are completely covered. They have less stress and are becoming more responsible for their own health. They are so grateful, and I am thrilled they are getting the care they need and deserve. I love my work.”

Monroe Clinic has experienced other positive results

as they promote wellness among this patient population. Primary care visits have increased. Emergency department visits, admissions, and the overall cost of care of these patients have all decreased.

In Memoriam... Walking with God



Sister Inés Lezama, CSA
May 3, 2016

Sister Inés, Lilliam Inés Lezama Mendoza, was born on November 13, 1941, in Nagarote, a city of León, Nicaragua. She professed perpetual vows in CSA on January 21, 1993. She studied additional courses after high school in Pastoral Ministry, Liturgy, Basic Christian Communities, and Intensive English. She also obtained licenses in teaching and typing. Sister Inés was known for her high energy. While Director of Santa Rosa School in Rosita, Nicaragua, she created an excellent marching band. With her guitar, she enlivened the music for Masses celebrated at Centro Santa Inés, the convent for the elderly and retired sisters in Managua. Her legacy was a commitment to her religious vocation, her fidelity to CSA, her gift of life to the poorest and most needy persons, her life of happiness, as well as music, dance, missionary spirit, and her life of prayer.



Sister Tarcisus Blasl
June 16, 2016

Sister Tarcisus Blasl, Madelaine Georgette Blasl, was born in Bronx, New York, on February 12, 1928. She professed her vows in CSA on August 15, 1955. Sister Tarcisus received a B.S. in Elementary Education from Marian College of Fond du Lac. She taught in New London, Eden and Waunakee, Wisconsin and her remaining 41 years in education were spent in Altoona, Pennsylvania, and Bronx, New York. She was an art teacher and an art resource person for seven years. Both of her parents were born in Vienna and she deeply valued her Austrian heritage. The arts, especially attending operas brought joy to her spirit. Among her skills and hobbies were needlework of any kind and sewing. In her later years she created many knitted caps, scarves and mittens which were donated to sales that benefited those in need.

For full obituaries go to www.csasisters.org. Memorials can be sent to the CSA Development Office or through the website.



Honoring our *Elders*

BY SISTER EDIE CREWS, CSA VOCATION DIRECTOR

*A*t a recent thank-you party for our Sister Story participants this year, several young women from Marian University explained how their relationship with their sister changed their lives. The Sister Story project is coordinated by St. Catherine's University in St. Paul, Minnesota, with funding from a Conrad Hilton grant. It gives young women in colleges across the United States a chance to learn about Catholic sisters through a relationship they build with a sister specially chosen for each of them. The project culminates with an oral history that each student conducts and films with the sister assigned to her.

At our party, Halle Castonia wept as she recounted the encouragement given to her by Sister Mary Dennis McMahan, former teacher and principal, as Halle herself prepares to go into the education field. As Halle so genuinely put it, "Teaching is getting a bad rap right now, and we are told how hard it is, but Sister Mary Dennis gave me the will to continue on in education."

When Halle asked Sister Mary Dennis how to handle the children in a classroom, Sister simply said, "Love them." This gave Halle the courage she needed to continue in education.

As a member of the Sisters of St. Agnes, I am well aware of the wisdom and courage of our elders. I learn from the sisters at Nazareth Court and Center continually—for instance, about how to live a simple and unassuming life. As the women in the Sister Story project also have learned, we need to honor our elders. They hold a wealth of wisdom.



Extending the *Mission*

BY CAROL BRAUN, DIRECTOR OF ASSOCIATE RELATIONSHIP

*T*he Sisters of St. Agnes have been a part of Vivian Karlin's life in a long and enriching journey. Vivian was taught by CSA sisters at St. Mary School, Ellis, Kansas; two of her aunts became Sisters of St. Agnes; and when she met her future husband, Cletus Karlin, she learned that five of his sisters were also members of the congregation. At their wedding, seven Sisters of St. Agnes were in attendance!

Inspired by the spirituality and ministry of CSA, Vivian became an associate member of the congregation 40 years ago. She made a commitment to extend the mission of God and the mission of CSA in her daily life and actions. Vivian has lived her commitment through prayer, volunteer work, and involvement in ministry in her parish.

Over the course of four decades, Vivian has participated in her church's choir, taught religious education and helped with clothing and food drives. She has enhanced her spirituality by participating in faith sharing and scripture study classes. A retired teacher, she received an award for 20 years of service in Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Salina, Kansas. "The support I have received from the Sisters of St. Agnes during good times and bad times has been unbelievable. They have deepened my spiritual life throughout my faith journey," said Vivian.

Vivian is one of sixteen associates from Kansas, Indiana, Alabama, and Wisconsin who celebrated their Jubilee anniversaries this year. Seven associate members celebrated 25 years and eight celebrated 15 years in an unfolding spiritual journey, individually and collectively making a difference in the world.

CSA *Summer Days*

BY SISTER PATRICE ROG, CSA

*"T*he nuns are coming! The nuns are coming!" This is a refrain often heard from student workers each June at Marian University as they prepare the dorms and campus for the arrival of sisters and associates for their annual CSA gathering.

As planning chairperson for CSA Summer Days 2016, I find the yearly gathering of vowed members and associates essential to deepening our relationships and discerning our future. This gathering of four days provides us time for communal prayer, reflection and discussion. With the help of a trained group facilitator, sisters and associates gather as a total assembly and in small groups to consider challenging questions such as: How are we living the mission of Jesus in our daily lives? How can we continue to be enriched by prayer and sustained by community? How are we discerning the signs of the times? Where is the Spirit leading us as we face the future?

Despite the serious nature of these gatherings, there is always time for laughter, storytelling, and enjoying each other's company! The time together culminates with the jubilee celebration of sisters and associates as the community honors special anniversaries of vowed members and associates.

I always believe Summer Days renew and reinvigorate us to return to our ministries as we strive to bring love and joy to those we serve.

Young at Heart

BY SISTER ANITA HENNING, CSA
GENERAL COUNCILOR

What do you think you will be doing at 94 years old? Sister Cecelia Schlaefer of Mesa, Arizona, says, "I can never thank the congregation enough for giving me my education." At 94 years young she continues to use her education in so many ways. Sister Cecelia is a musician through and through. She has used her musical ability and her spirituality to enrich the lives of others and she is still going strong!

Sister Cecelia's list of activities is long. She teaches Bible classes and a 4-part class on angels. She is chaplain for three organizations: Catholic Daughters, Auxiliary of the Knights of Columbus, and Discovery Point Senior Housing Complex, where she lives. She provides days of retreat for the Auxiliary. Four times a year she does theater productions for Discovery Point. These include choral presentations, solos, and skits. Twice a month she goes out to breakfast with 16 parishioners for companionship and sharing spirituality. Sister Cecelia also teaches a 3-credit course in music at Benedictine University in Mesa. She carries her keyboard back and forth to class.

Eight senior housing facilities are graced with music every week through Sister Cecelia's musical talents. She encourages residents to liven up and join in for a fun time. She also provides "dinner mood music" for the 180 residents of Discovery Point three times a week.

Added to all this, Sister Cecelia has played violin in the local symphony orchestra for 15 years. She recently took a short break due to a fractured wrist. She won't be sidelined for long.

"I enjoy living my life to the fullest." Just think how much would be missing from the lives of these people if Sister Cecelia were not there to share her gifts and love with them.



Jenny Lukomski,
CSA Archivist

New Archivist at *St. Agnes Convent*

BY VALERIE GRACZYK, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

Sifting through long forgotten items in an attic is a little bit like what an archivist does every day. The newly hired archivist, Jenny Lukomski, fills her days sorting, cataloging, and reorganizing the archives at St. Agnes Convent.

When asked what she has found in her first few weeks in her position she shared:

- Finding rules of etiquette in regard to how a sister should act, dress and speak that dated back to the 1950s and 60s.
- Thousands of photographs documenting the history of convent life.
- Reading original letters of Mother Agnes, one of the three founders of CSA, and getting a sense of what she was like through her correspondence.

"What I most enjoy about this work is having material easily accessible for people who are looking for a particular piece of information or photo. I am so pleased when I can create a system that will allow someone to find an item easily," shared Jenny. "My previous work experience involved a wide range manuscript collection; it really helped prepare me for this position. CSA's collection of items is considered a private archive available for access by congregation members and for limited use by outside researchers. Future exhibits of archived materials will be created and displayed in Founders Hall for a broader audience to enjoy."

Jenny has joined two professional groups to support her networking, one of which is Archivists for Congregations of Women Religious. She has also contacted archivists of different religious congregations. One suggestion she received was to look at these archives "as a family collection rather than as a corporation."

"I am very glad to be part of this 'family' and working with CSA on its collection of history and memories," concluded Jenny.



CSA

Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes
Promoting Justice, Building Community

320 County Road K
Fond du Lac, WI 54937

Ways to connect with CSA:

CSA web site:

<http://www.csasisters.org/>

Adelante Mujer/Advance Woman

<http://www.womanadvance.com/>

(in the front page of our web site)

Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation

<http://justicepeacecsa.blogspot.com/>

(in the front page of our web site)

Just Saying

<http://csajustsaying.blogspot.com/>

(in the front page of our web site)

Streams 'N Stirrings, Sister Jean:

(in the front page of our web site)



<http://www.facebook.com/sasisters?sk=wall>

(in the front page of our web site)



[http://www.youtube.com/user/](http://www.youtube.com/user/TheCSAChannel1)

TheCSAChannel1

(in the front page of our web site)

Fall Program Offerings

- September 1 is the **World Day of Prayer for Care of Creation**; Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation will disseminate a prayer service for use on that day. (See <http://catholicclimatemovement.global/world-day-of-prayer/>)
- On September 8, 2016, from 6:30-8:00 p.m., Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation will sponsor a workshop in preparation for the November 8th election – **Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship**. The US Catholic Conference of Bishops' guide will be the basis for the presentation.
- In collaboration with the Wisconsin Network for Peace and Justice, on September 17, Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation will host a workshop called "**Racial Justice Tipping Point**." The campaign's goal is to get 3.5% of WI's population committed to promote equity and end racism in our state. (See <http://www.wnpj.org/RJTPCampaign>)

Mindfulness—Session 3! For those who participated in Mindfulness sessions one and two with Sister Patrice Rog, here is an opportunity to gather again for some teaching, sharing and practice. Saturday, September 10, 2016, 10-11:30 a.m., in Founders Hall. Free will offering is appreciated.

On the Cover

Associate Jubilarians ~ photos, top set, left

Front L to R: Jan Parker, Rosemary Justinger, Vivian Karlin
Back L to R: Karen Heuberger, Ron Palm, Madelyn Rambo, Sybil Teehan, Eileen Harden

25 Years ~ photos, top set, center

Sister Francis Sánchez

40 Years ~ photos, middle set, center

Sister Julie Ann Krahl

50 Years ~ photos, middle set, left

Front L to R: Sisters Jeremy Quinn, Sharon Pollnow, Katie Schilling
Back L to R: Sisters Joanita Stelter, Donna Innes, Jean Hinderer, Ann Koerner, Brigid Layden

60 Years ~ photos, middle set, right

Front L to R: Sisters Mary Louise Pfannenstiel, Paulette Shaw
Back L to R: Sisters Barbara Jean Rosswurm, Mary Martin Voglewede, Beata Reiser, Julaine Meyer, René Backe

70 Years ~ photos, top set, right

Front L to R: Sisters Mary Jane Wipperfurth, Rebecca Endres
Back L to R: Sisters Collean Walsh, Michaela O'Brien

75 Years ~ photos, bottom left

L to R: Sisters Mercedes Geib, Mildred Ryan, Helen Renzelmann