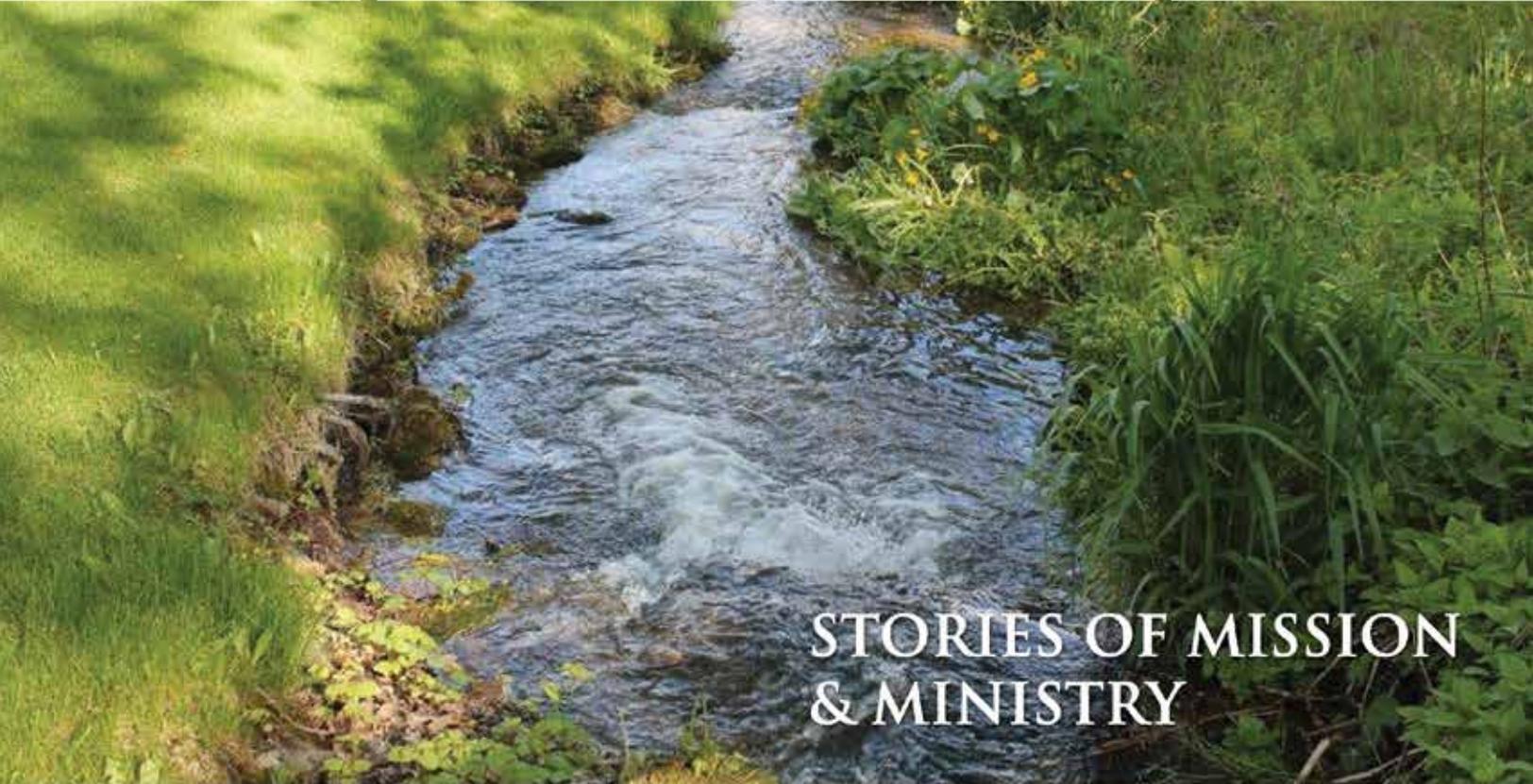


REFLECTIONS & *Connections*

MAY 2017



STORIES OF MISSION
& MINISTRY



CSA

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

Dear Friends,



A passage from our CSA Constitutions that I would like to share with you provides me with many shades of meaning for the varied circumstances life presents:

Transitions of every sort mark our lives. We try to recognize in each of them a graced moment in our on-going formation, one in which we can live out the paschal mystery and build the kingdom of God. (58)

Here we are in mid-May enjoying the newly sprung flowers and the leafing out of the trees. We appreciate this loveliness after a milder than normal winter that seemed too green and a cooler than usual March that appeared all too white. The switches from winter to spring and now to the edge of summer show us that the passage of time is always unpredictable whether in the events of our lives or in the beauty of creation which surrounds and envelops us.

CSA is now moving into Chapter 2017, a time and space in which members enter into reflection leading to action around our spiritual and apostolic vitality into the future, always keeping in mind the heritage of our founders. This is a time of transition. New initiatives will be deliberated and chosen in keeping with our commitment to work towards the transformation of ourselves, the church and the world, for the sake of promoting the Gospel message.

Transitions, transformation and change are necessary elements in any organization and especially in one devoted to living the mission of Jesus in our times. Just as winter has given way to spring and now to the hint of summer, we in CSA pray to open ourselves to the revelations that speak to us in the events of our daily lives, calling us forward to respond ever more fully to the needs of our times. As we prepare for Chapter, we ask God, "Empower us to weave with You a tapestry of beauty and strength that reflects Your desire for our community, our world, and Your mission into the future." We invite you to join with us on this journey of love.

In the peace and love of Christ,

Sister Jean Steffes, CSA
General Superior

Contents



- 3 On Fire to Serve
- 4 With God's Help
- 5 The Big Picture
- 5 A Beacon of Hope
- 6 A Sacred and Storied Legacy
- 7 With a Song in My Heart
- 7 See, Judge, Act
- 8 In Memoriam... Walking with God

ON THE COVER:

Photos of CSA motherhouse grounds © Suzanne Flood, CSA Executive Assistant, used with permission.

On Fire to Serve

BY VALERIE GRACZYK,
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

*W*hich Sister of St. Agnes loves football and attends Friday night games at Waunakee High School? Or was the drum majorette who twirled her baton for her high school band? Or at one time could do a back bend to pick up her baton with her teeth? Who plays “Taps” on her bugle for Veteran’s Day and has accompanied veterans on Badger Honor flights? Or who jogs three to five miles a day and ten miles on weekends? If you guessed this is Sister Georgeann Roudebush, you are right!

Living in Madison, Wisconsin, for the past 30 years, Sister is just 12 miles from her hometown of Waunakee, where she frequently visits family and friends and participates in local events there. For the past 14 years, she has served as a hospice chaplain. In a recent interview, she smiled as she shared, “For me, this is not work. I feel privileged to provide spiritual support and caring presence to hospice patients, their families, and their friends, welcoming them and letting the mystery of their lives fill me.”

“Sister Georgeann is the calm in the storm, so positive, compassionate, and understanding,” shared Rick Bourne, President and CEO of Home Health United, where Sister currently works. “She has a wonderful sense of humor and is a great comfort and calming presence to both staff and patients. Her creative spirit enables her to try new things and go anywhere we ask her to go – which she does with a fire in her heart and a smile on her face.” Is it any wonder that Mother Teresa is her idol?

“Sister Georgeann is the calm in the storm, so positive, compassionate, and understanding.”

— Rick Bourne,
President and CEO
of Home Health United



Bill and Kay Sather receiving communion from Sister Georgeann.



“With God’s help, I strive to give as much as I am able.”

— Sister Guadalupe Aguilar

With God’s Help

BY VALERIE GRACZYK,
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

Only teachers could picture what faces Sister Guadalupe Aguilar, a preschool teacher in a public school in Rosita, Nicaragua, when she comes to school each day. From the moment the doors open at 7:30 a.m., until dismissal at 11:30 a.m., she is working her magic of teaching 33 children between the ages of two and four. She does it all without any of the usual supplies: paper, pencils, crayons, notebooks. With an attention span of a minute or two, these children somehow learn the alphabet, some personal hygiene, and relating skills. They are taught to sing, to play, and to eat at their tables with concern for one another.

Sister Guadalupe said: “Every day, before I meet my students, I prepare myself spiritually as well as

psychologically. I pray to the Lord for help, saying ‘I cannot do this alone, Lord.’”

She continued: “Many of these children come from families that are in dire poverty and have had nothing to eat before arriving at school; the food they receive here is all they will have for the day. They are poorly dressed and come to school barefoot because they own no shoes.”

She went on to say that she found her experience in teaching in a private Catholic school very different from teaching in a public school. Maybe resources were missing in the public school but her presence as a woman religious is very important. “With God’s help,” she said, “I strive to give as much as I am able.”

The Big *Picture*

BY SISTER EDIE CREWS, CSA
CSA VOCATION DIRECTOR

For the past three years, I have served as the vocation director for the Sisters of St. Agnes. When I reflect on my experience, I ask myself, “What is the *big picture* within this ministry?” The answer to my question is: “Relationships.”

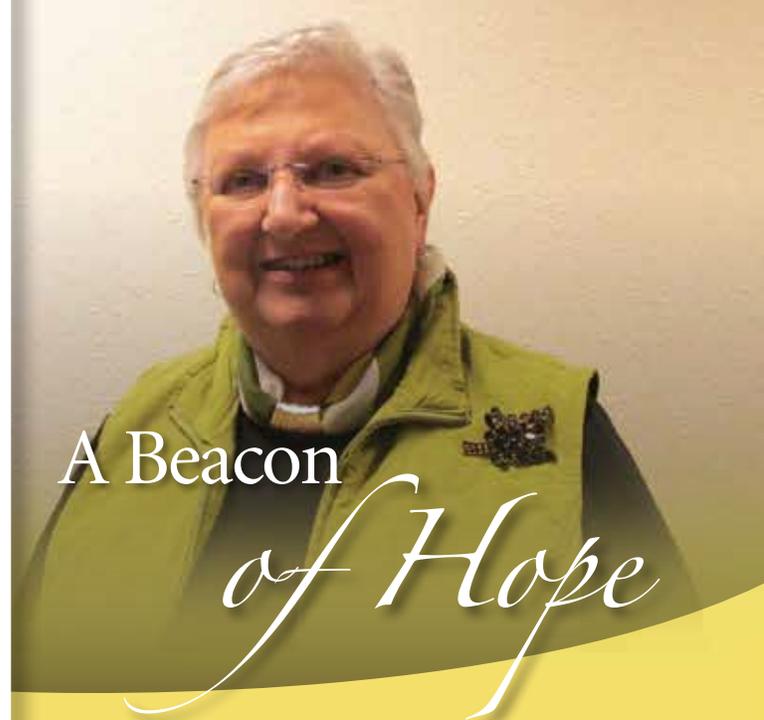
I have come to a renewed belief in the goodness of people, especially the young people I have been privileged to meet. These women demonstrate a real hunger for connecting with something bigger than themselves. This is so evident in the students with whom I engage at Marian University and with the women currently in vocation discernment. They express their desire to make the world a better place just by their presence in it. Their desire resonates so much with my own reason for joining CSA – to be a part of something bigger and to search for ways to help change the world.

I often ask myself about the future of religious life and whether there will be a significant increase in numbers of those who choose this way of life. I believe it is still important to plant the seed of a religious vocation in the hearts of those I meet. I view my ministry as one of welcome and of keeping the door open for those who seek to discern a call to religious life. My role includes providing opportunities for young people to learn what a “sister” is by experiencing how we pray, live community, and serve others through ministry to others.

At times this task of vocation director seems daunting, but I sustain myself through prayer, reflection on the gospel, the support of my community, collaboration with vocation directors from other communities, and a personal commitment to healthy diet and exercise. I continue to be energized by those whose lives I touch in this ministry of seeing the “bigger picture.”



Marian University students with Sister Edie L to R: Alonna Heller, Brianna Hettenhaus, Natalie Mullendore, Edie, Katie Schwarzbauer



A Beacon *of Hope*

BY CAROL BRAUN, DIRECTOR OF ASSOCIATE RELATIONSHIP

When Associate Mary Ann Steffes, RN, was working in inpatient alcohol and drug treatment services at St. Agnes Hospital, she realized there was little community awareness of the struggles of women recovering from alcohol and/or other chemical addictions. Knowing that there was no place for them to get help when they were released from the hospital, she organized a task force of women who searched for resources and people with the necessary skills to create a safe, supportive home-like environment for these women. “My inspiration and commitment to this endeavor were implanted in me by the example of the Sisters of St. Agnes who knew how to get things done when they see a need. These are strong women of action, ready to speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves,” shared Mary Ann.

In 1993, her dream became a reality when Beacon House opened! This non-profit organization was dedicated to providing compassionate, professional help to women and women-with-children recovering from alcoholism and/or chemical dependency. Since then, Beacon House has provided more than 1000 women with a transitional living experience with an average stay of 90 to 120 days. Full-time counselors and trained staff provide continuing treatment tailored to each woman’s needs and her efforts in rebuilding her life.

As an associate of CSA, Mary Ann continues to identify and respond to the needs of those on the margins in the civic community. She states, “With the support of the sisters, associates and my husband John, I have the courage to claim who I am and what I believe in. I believe in meeting people where I find them and encourage and support them in claiming their own power.”



Monroe Clinic employees celebrate Sister Florence's retirement: (left) Jane Monahan, Leslie Schmidt, Kris Wisnefske, Sister Florence, Linda O'Leary, and Mike Sanders, Monroe Clinic's president and CEO.

A Sacred and Storied *Legacy*

BY SISTER MARY NOEL BROWN, CSA
EXECUTIVE LEADER OF SPONSORSHIP

We plant seeds that one day will grow.
We water seeds already planted, knowing they hold future promise.
We lay foundations that need further development.
We provide yeast far beyond our capabilities.

— Ken Untener

Seeds of health care were planted in Monroe years before the Sisters of St. Agnes came in 1939 to staff St. Clare Hospital. Since then, countless sisters have served as nurses, chaplains, administrators, dietitians, and therapists. With their lay colleagues and physicians, the sisters watered seeds already planted and laid the foundation for Monroe Clinic to become a thriving Catholic health care system at 13 locations in southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois.

For several years, Sister Florence Magnan has been the only member of CSA in active professional ministry at Monroe Clinic. She recently retired after serving over 30 years as a physical therapist, marking the end of a significant era in the life of Monroe Clinic.

In CSA's storied history at Monroe Clinic, Sister Florence and other sisters provided yeast far beyond their capabilities. They nurtured the seed of mission

and translated the congregation's charism of pastoral concern for those whose faith life and human dignity is threatened into a ministry of healing the sick, caring for the poor, and advocating for the voiceless.

The yeast of CSA's ministry continues to expand in over 1000 employees, leaders, providers, and volunteers. They have a strong sense of mission, are grounded in CSA's legacy, and have a deep concern for the overall well-being of each person they serve.

"We are blessed by the work of the Sisters of St. Agnes," stated Jane Monahan, vice president of ministry and human resources. "Their sacred and storied history continues. Their legacy is our heritage and we will honor it through our ministry of healing."

Sisters of St. Agnes continue to serve as volunteers and on the boards of Monroe Clinic and the clinic's foundation.

With a Song in My Heart

BY SISTER ANITA HENNING, CSA
GENERAL COUNCILOR

Witty, kind, sensitive, and relational are words that describe Sister Jovita Winkel. Sister Jovita is the pastoral associate for St. Mary Help of Christians Parish in Briggsville, Wisconsin. Her ministry is a combination of administration and pastoral care. St. Mary's is a small country parish. Outreach to parishioners gives Sister Jovita joy and energy. She often visits the sick and those in nursing homes. If she is not visiting she will call a person whom she knows is living alone or feeling down just to let them know that someone cares. Even going to the events in the small town is a part of her ministry because there she comes to know the people in a different way and creates a relationship where God can use her.

Sister Jovita has a way of sharing her faith that helps people understand difficult doctrine or concepts. Analogies are her friend and get her point across clearly to others. Her ministry also includes offering opportunities for adult faith formation. This might be a program for Advent or Lent. It could be something for families or for parents. No matter what she is presenting, you can be sure that a song will be part of it. Music speaks to her heart, and she uses it to speak to the hearts of others.

Father Gary Krahenbuhl, pastor of the parishes in Portage and Briggsville says of Sister Jovita:

"Sister Jovita offers a unique approach to her ministry that is a delight to witness. The confidence of years of experience and her deep faith give her a wisdom that is a treasure to the parish community and to those of us who work with her. Her love of poetry and scripture and her unparalleled gift of remembering names and dates and events and connections flow into endless and treasured stories. I have been blessed to work at her side, receiving her gifts over and over."

Underneath all the ministry is a deep prayer life. God is her support and the song in her heart.



See, Judge, Act

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

In the letter to the Congregation for the feast of Mother Agnes, Sister Jean Steffes and the Council urged the Sisters to "go forward

committed to the transformation of the world, the Church, and ourselves through promoting systemic change for the quality of life, justice for the economically poor, and furtherance of the role of women in Church and society..."

The journey to transformation is long and arduous, requiring daily reflective reading of the Gospel in the light of the "signs of the times." In *Mater et Magistra*, #236, Pope John XXIII suggested three essential steps: **see, judge, and act**, based on the words of Jesus: "I am the way, the truth, and the life." These steps guide CSA sisters and associates as they respond to migrants and refugees who suffer so much in today's economic and political climate.

SEE clearly. ... the Way

- Examine the lived reality of immigrants and refugees. Let them share their hopes and needs.
- Read/study reliable sources for accurate information as opposed to "alternative news." Examples: *Justice for Immigrants*, *Latin American Working Groups*, *CLINIC*, etc.

JUDGE rightly. ... the Truth

- Analyze the complex economic, political, social, and cultural factors related to migration, to make informed and right judgments.
- Judge the situations based on the Gospel and Church teachings in regard to "welcoming the stranger" as Jesus did.

ACT boldly. ... the Life

- Identify actions that address the injustices suffered by immigrants and refugees.
- Work to transform the root causes of injustices experienced by those trapped by poverty, discrimination, trade policies, etc.

As religious called to be prophetic witnesses to the Gospel in the Church and in the world, the Sisters of St. Agnes strive to see, judge, and act in solidarity with migrants and refugees.





CSA

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

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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://csa-vocations.blogspot.com/>

(in the front page of our web site)

Streams 'N Stirrings

<http://csa-vocations.blogspot.com/>

(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)

In Memoriam... Walking with God



Sister Mary Catherine Younger, CSA

January 18, 2017

Sister Mary Catherine, formerly known as Sister Henrietta, was born in St. Peter, Kansas, on May 12, 1931. She made her final vows on August 15, 1952. Sister Mary Catherine received a Certificate as a Food Service Director from Fontbonne College, Clayton, Missouri, and a Certificate in the Nutritional Care of the Elderly from the University of Wisconsin Science Center. She ministered throughout her life in food services at St. Joseph Orphanage in Baraga, Michigan, and in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, at St. Mary's Springs Academy, St. Agnes Convent, and Boyle Apostolic Center. Sister delighted many with her flair for creating the beautiful whether she was decorating cakes, designing her own delicate greeting cards, setting a festive table, or preparing attractive dishes for daily meals or special occasions.



Sister Clare Marie Conrad, CSA

January 20, 2017

Sister Clare Marie (Bernice Marie Conrad) was born in Altoona, Pennsylvania, on June 24, 1916. She made her final vows on August 15, 1935. She received a BS in Education from Marian College of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, an MA in Library Science from Rosary College, River Forest, Illinois, and an MA in Theology from St. Mary's College, Notre Dame, Indiana. Sister Clare Marie taught in elementary schools in Wisconsin for 14 years. She served as librarian for 16 years in Wisconsin, New York, and Indiana. She was appointed to ministry within the congregation serving as Novice Directress and Secretary General. In 1979 she worked in pastoral ministry and religious education in Arizona. Her final ministry was in her hometown of Altoona, Pennsylvania, visiting many elderly and homebound persons.

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