

# REFLECTIONS & *Connections*

NOVEMBER 2021



STORIES OF MISSION  
& MINISTRY



**CSA**

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

# Dear Friends,



As we go further into the autumn season, nature is inviting us to reflect on the reality of change. Crops are being harvested, larders are being filled, and fields are going fallow in order to regenerate for spring planting. The geese and other birds are signaling their migratory

journeys through their cries and overhead flight patterns, aware that they must travel to other familiar places for a new season. Trees are going into a bright and colorful display before losing their canopies; their empty branches soon becoming a stark reminder of the cycle of life. Likewise, many of the animals are finding places where they can shelter or hibernate to continue their life cycles. All these movements in nature involve a letting go to continue the annual rhythms of death or dormancy in order to prepare for new life.

Seasons of change are also in the air for CSA. The congregation is in preparation for our June 2022 General Chapter. At this gathering, the community sets direction for the next four years and elects a leadership team to guide our movement into the future. The theme chosen for our chapter planning is, “*Together, embracing a*

*transformative journey.*” This theme provides the needed space for flexibility as each sister opens herself to all the ways that entice CSA to respond to the realities and needs of the times. Those needs and realities include concerns ranging from the most mundane to the most profound. In fact, mundane and profound are so intertwined in the concerns arising in our society and culture that there is really no distinction. No need, however small, can be disregarded as irrelevant to the Gospel call. There is nothing that escapes the mandate to love one another and all of creation as I have loved you. (See John 13:34)

I would like to close with a stanza from the prayer CSA has embraced as we open ourselves to become vulnerable to all that lies ahead:

*God of all the many ways to You,*

*Together, we move through valleys of darkness into ever-evolving new Life.*

*Gentle Spirit, give us courage and strength to be transformed for the world.*

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

## Contents



- 3 CSA Associates Explore Values
- 4 Reflecting on Our Common Home
- 5 Living Laudato Sí
- 6 Pray with a Sister During Advent
- 7 In Memoriam... Walking with God
- 8 Welcome New Staff

### **Editorial Board Members:**

*Sister Jeremy Quinn, Sister Jean Perry,  
Sister Patricia Hayes, Sister Cyndi  
Nienhaus, Dusty Krikau,  
and Suzanne Flood.*

### **ON THE COVER:**

*At noon on Tuesday, September 28, CSA sisters in Fond du Lac joined with other community members to offer a moment of silence and prayer for healthcare workers as the pandemic continues to take its toll. Some sisters joined together in prayer in the motherhouse dining room while others took the message of hope with them on signs to St. Agnes Hospital.*

# CSA Associates

# Explore Values

**D**uring the summer of 2021, the CSA Associate Community gathered virtually for their annual visioning day. They used their time together to explore a number of values the group considered vital to their continued progress in carrying out the mission and charism of CSA. In October, during Associate Community Week, they revisited with one another the values named within the summer gathering and concluded the week with a Recommitment Prayer Service. The sampling below lists some of the values which were identified, together with a few of the ways the associate community lives them:

**Spirituality** - An associate's spirituality is formed by an awareness of the changing needs of the times and responds with actions that extend the CSA charism and mission to others. It is enhanced by prayer services, retreats, and centering prayer.

**Care of Earth** - Associates honor their interdependence with all of God's creation. Communally, they commit to care for Earth by planting trees and flowers and participating in highway cleanup. Individually, associates

recycle, reduce consumption, compost, reduce purchases of new goods, donate to and shop at thrift stores, and buy from local producers.

**Community** - Associates support the gifts, talents, and strengths of each individual in the community through "Home Circles" and gatherings. Bonded by the CSA charism, individual commitments and spirituality are enhanced by community commitment and action.

**Hospitality and Inclusion** - To be hospitable and inclusive is to welcome with kindness every person we encounter. Associates extend hospitality and inclusion beyond their community to share the love of God with goodwill and grace, in word and action, recognizing the dignity and giftedness of all people.

**Social Justice** - Associates studied and affirmed the Corporate Stances of the Congregation and now continue to integrate the values of the documents into their lives. Associates take actions for the common good, advocate for systemic change, commit to educate themselves on current issues, and participate in justice initiatives.

---

Learn more about the CSA Associate Community  
[www.csasisters.org/be-an-associate](http://www.csasisters.org/be-an-associate)





# Reflecting on Our Common Home

During the week of August 23, 2021, Sister Dianne Bergant, CSA, offered a spiritual retreat to the sisters living in the CSA motherhouse. Focused on viewing *Laudato Si'* from a Biblical perspective, the retreat sessions were recorded and are available for the public on the CSA YouTube channel and webpage.

“*Laudato Si' - Care for our Common Home*” is Pope Francis’ encyclical letter written in 2015 and addressed to “every person living on this planet.” The letter addresses the ecological crisis occurring on our common home, its causes, approaches to halt and reverse destruction, and why we must act.

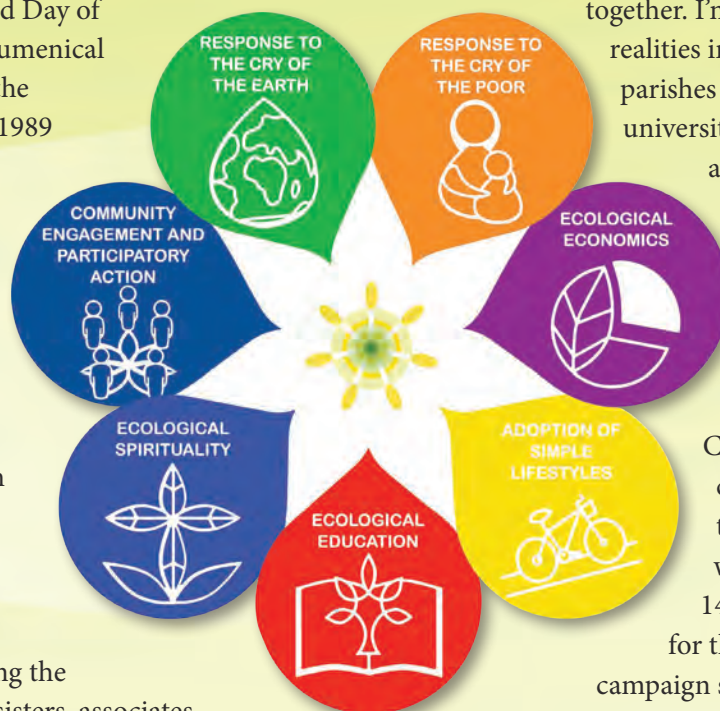
During her 10-session retreat, Sister Dianne invites viewers to experience the profound understanding that can be discovered when we explore faith and spirituality using a metaphorical lens. She examines St. Francis’ *Canticle of the Sun* and the stories of Job, Noah, and creation with an eye focused on the three themes of *Laudato Si'*: Anthropocentrism, Interconnectedness, and Interdependence.

---

Watch the retreat:  
<https://bit.ly/3mr6vMA>

# Living *Laudato Si'*

During the Season of Creation, people of all faiths around the world are invited to pray and care for creation. September 1 was first proclaimed as a World Day of Prayer for Creation by Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios I for the Orthodox community in 1989 and embraced by other European churches in 2001. In 2015, Pope Francis recognized the World Day of Prayer for Creation in the Catholic Church and also instituted the Season of Creation, which begins September 1 and ends on October 4, the Feast Day of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of ecology. This year during the Season of Creation, CSA sisters, associates, and partners in ministry joined in reflections on the seven goals of *Laudato Si'*. Using email and the CSA website, the CSA Office of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation shared daily opportunities to “See” the signs of our times by reviewing relevant resources, “Reflect” on a pertinent quotation from *Laudato Si'*, and “Act” by considering some of the actions CSA has already taken to care for Earth.



In a June 27 video, Pope Francis announced the seven-year *Laudato Si'* Action Platform: “I would like to invite everyone to tackle this journey together. I’m addressing these seven realities in particular: families, parishes & dioceses, school & universities, hospitals, businesses and farms, organizations, groups & movements, and religious communities.” Joining with the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, CSA began a 40-day prayer campaign on October 4, the Feast of St. Francis, and will conclude on November 14, the World Day of Prayer for the Poor. The 40-day prayer campaign supports the seven sectors joining the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform with a dedicated day of prayer for each, connecting each sector with a *Laudato Si'* Goal.

As the 40 days come to a close, all members of the universal Church are warmly invited to discern their commitment to creating a *Laudato Si'* Plan and review the existing resources on the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform website.

---

Read the Season of Creation content at [www.csasisters.org/integrity-of-creation](http://www.csasisters.org/integrity-of-creation)

Read the daily prayers at [www.csasisters.org/lsap](http://www.csasisters.org/lsap)

Read the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform website [laudatosiactionplatform.org](http://laudatosiactionplatform.org)



## Pray With a Sister *During Advent*

**A**s Advent approaches, people throughout the world will focus on hope, peace, love, and joy, but we know that the holidays can also be filled with needs for comfort and companionship. With that in mind, the Sisters of St. Agnes offer time each week of Advent when individuals may call and request a prayer companion.

The general public is invited to call 920-907-2300 from 1-4 p.m. Central Time on Wednesdays during Advent to join with a sister in prayer. Upon calling, your name and number will be collected, and a sister will call you back momentarily to pray with you privately. In 2021, Advent begins on November 28 and ends on Friday, December 24.

Prayer requests of all varieties, large and small, are welcome and personal information will be kept confidential.

## *In Memoriam...*



### **Sister Rose André Miller, CSA** August 5, 2021

Sister Rose André (Mary Theresa), was born July 4, 1936, in Decatur, Indiana. She made her profession of vows as a Sister of St. Agnes on August 15, 1957. Sister Rose André received a B.S.

in Education from Marian College, and her M.S. in Education from Xavier University, Cincinnati, Ohio. She taught kindergarten and primary grade children in New York, Wisconsin, and Indiana until 2003 when she moved to Nazareth Court and Center in Fond du Lac. There she shared her artistic and creative talents with sisters, staff, and visitors. In 2020, failing health necessitated her move to St. Francis Home where she died on August 5, 2021.



### **Sister Cecelia Schlaefer** August 17, 2021

Sister Cecelia Schlaefer, CSA, formerly Sister Paul, was born March 11, 1922, in Campbellsport, Wisconsin. After graduating from St. Mary's Springs Academy,

Cecelia entered St. Agnes Convent where she made profession of vows as Sister Paul on August 15, 1943. Sister Cecelia earned a B.S. in Music Education from Alverno College, Milwaukee, a Masters in Musicology and Doctorate in Music Arts from Catholic University, Washington, D.C. She taught music at elementary and high schools in Kansas, Pennsylvania, Indiana, and Wisconsin as well as in the Music Department at Marian College. During her last twenty years she ministered in various parishes in Arizona, and as a volunteer at local retirement centers. She retired to Nazareth Court and Center in 2017 before moving in 2021 to St. Francis Home where she died on August 17, 2021, just seven months before her 100th birthday.

# Walking with God



**Sister Judith Schmidt, CSA**  
September 10, 2021

Sister Judith Schmidt (Gladys) was born April 13, 1934, in Catherine, Kansas. Gladys entered St. Agnes Convent in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, after graduating from Girls Catholic High School in Hays, Kansas,

and professed her vows as a Sister of St. Agnes on August 15, 1955, as Sister Judith. She received a B.S. in Elementary Education from Marian College, Fond du Lac, and an M.S. in Educational Administration from Marygrove College, Detroit, Michigan. Her education ministry, leadership, and relational skills were evident at all educational levels: elementary, high school, and higher education. She was beloved in the Fond du Lac community as a gifted woman and educational leader, promoter of organizations advocating for the poor, supporter of arts and music in the city. Sister Judith's personality and mission-driven enthusiasm were also recognized by the Sisters of St. Agnes who valued her gifts by appointing and electing her to the congregation's leadership roles of Apostolic Councilor in 1969 and General Superior for the entire Agnesian congregation from 1977 to 1985. In 2016 Sister Judith moved to Nazareth Center until frail health led her to St. Francis Home in 2020 where she died peacefully on September 10, 2021.



**Sister Dolores Taddy, CSA**  
September 18, 2021

Sister Dolores Taddy, 99, formerly Sister Peter, was born November 27, 1921, in Two Rivers, Wisconsin. After graduating from eighth grade at St. Luke School, Dolores entered St. Agnes Convent, completed high

school at St. Agnes High, and was professed as Sister Peter. She received a B.S. in Education from Marian College and ministered as an elementary school teacher in Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, New York,

and New Mexico. In 1967 she began her life as a missionary among the people in Ecuador, Honduras, and Nicaragua. She was a creative teacher and catechist while also sharing her craft-making skills and conducting evening enrichment courses for women. Retiring from Nicaragua in 2000, Sister Dolores lived at St. Agnes Convent in Fond du Lac where she engaged in a variety of ministry needs as Spanish interpreter at St. Agnes Hospital, catechist at St. Peter Parish, volunteer in service to the poor. She moved to Nazareth Court in 2015 to live with the sisters there until September 2021. Serious illness required admission to St. Francis Home with hospice care on September 17, 2021. She died peacefully the next morning.



**Sister Bertha Bumann, CSA**  
October 4, 2021

Bertha was born January 24, 1928, in Altoona, Pennsylvania. She was taught by the Sisters of St. Agnes, and after two years at Altoona Catholic High School, entered St. Agnes Convent in Fond du Lac

where she graduated from St. Agnes High School. On August 15, 1947, she made her profession of vows as Sister Vincent. She taught for fourteen years in elementary schools in Wisconsin, Kansas, and Illinois. However, her desire to be a missionary was fulfilled when she was sent to Nicaragua and ministered there for twenty-one years. In addition to teaching and pastoral ministry, she assisted with formation and was a CSA Apostolic Councilor in Latin America. Her missionary spirit was especially evident during the 1972 earthquake and the political revolution of the 1980s. After returning to the U.S. in 1982, Sister Bertha served in administrative roles at St. Agnes Convent, The Leo House in New York City, and Nazareth Court and Center. In 2010, she joined the sisters in the Nazareth community until 2017 when frail health led her to St. Francis Home where she received loving care until her death on October 4, 2021.



320 County Road K  
Fond du Lac, WI 54937

*csasisters.org*



Update your mailing address or  
subscription preferences at  
[csasisters.org/subscriptions](https://csasisters.org/subscriptions)

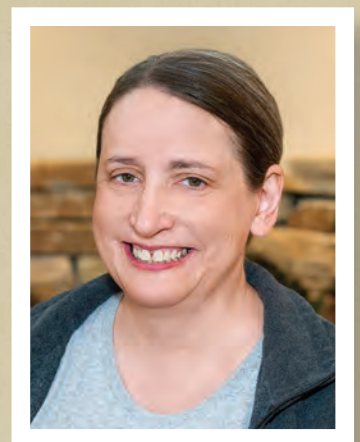
Or email us at [csaadm@csasisters.org](mailto:csaadm@csasisters.org)

Or call 920-907-2300

# Welcome New Staff

CSA is pleased to welcome Barb Capoyianes to the housekeeping staff. Barb was born and raised in Fond du Lac and many of the Fond du Lac sisters recognize her smiling face from the 15 years she spent serving them ButterBurgers at the local Culver's. Since joining CSA's staff in September, Barb has enjoyed the positive atmosphere and loves that "no matter where I go, there is something beautiful outside the window." Barb and her husband have been married for 39 years and love

spending time with their two sons and two grandchildren. She is also an avid reader and enjoys cross-stitch and embroidery. We look forward to working with Barb for many years to come.



**Barb Capoyianes**