

REFLECTIONS

AUGUST 2024

&
Connections

STORIES OF MISSION
& MINISTRY

Doris Klein, CSA



CSA

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

Dear Companions on Life's Journey,

Our sisters gather every year for CSA Days: a week of prayer, contemplative dialogue, discernment, and planning for the future care of members and the Mission. ***Walking Together in Hope*** was the theme of this year's CSA Days.

The Holy Mystery of Love surrounded us during our days together. We hope that you also experience that Divine outpouring of joy, peace, and love.

All of us hope that our fractured world will be healed. We continue to believe that it will and that we can contribute to that healing. Thank you for your part in furthering the much-needed healing.

Celebrating with our Jubilarians reminded us once again how blessed we are to have Companions on our Journey of Life. You are also our companions. We are so grateful to each of you who share your passion for Mission.

Let us continue to ***Walk Together in Hope***.

With Caring and Grateful Hearts,

Sisters Sharon Pollnow, Peg Spindler, Madeline Gianforte, and Lael Niblick



Pictured L to R: Sisters Sharon Pollnow, General Superior; Lael Niblick, General Councilor; Madeline Gianforte, General Councilor; and Peg Spindler, General Vicar

ON THE COVER:

"Open Hearts" © Doris Klein, CSA

With gratitude and joy we honor those celebrating Jubilee and the many ways they have each opened their hearts in joyful service. We share in celebration of the multiple ways they have brought joy to so many with their service, inspiration and encouragement. With gratitude and joy we bless them as they continue to share their beauty, wisdom and presence in our world today.

Contents



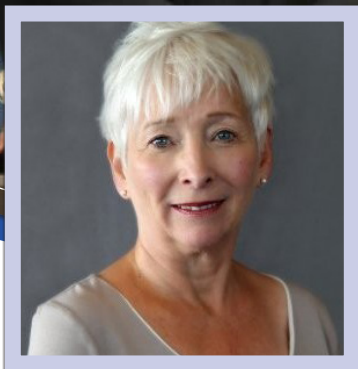
Editorial Board Members:

Sister Jeremy Quinn, Sister Jean Perry, Dusty Krikau, and Mary Christopherson

- 3 Appreciating a Legacy
- 4 Congratulations, Jubilarians!
- 6 Celebrating a Century
- 7 Obituaries
- 8 Fall Engagement Opportunities



Appreciating a *Legacy*



Michelle Majewski joined Marian University in 1987 as a faculty member in the psychology department. During her time there, she became program director, department chair, and the dean of two different schools within Marian University. In 2018, she retired from her teaching career and took a part-time position working for the Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes as Sponsorship Advisor. In 2020, just as the pandemic was beginning to unfold, Michelle took on the role of Acting President and was named Marian's 17th President just six months later.

During her 37 years at Marian, she founded the *Journal of Homeland Security Education*, received the "Underkofler Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching" award, retired the university's debt by raising \$12.1 million, launched the Construction Management and Risk Management and Insurance programs, and led the renovation of a new, state-of-the-art nursing space. Just prior to her retirement in May 2024, Michelle was recognized with the Titan 100 award, a program recognizing the top 100 CEOs and C-level executives in the state.

Beyond her large list of accomplishments, Michelle is also appreciated as a relational leader. "By maintaining connections with colleagues and sharing ideas, I demonstrate that I value others' ideas," said Michelle. "I possess a 'can do' attitude that communicates my excitement for student, faculty, and administration achievements, and I seek growth opportunities and invite others to engage in purposeful discourse toward those objectives."

Sister Sharon Pollnow, CSA General Superior, said, "Dr. Michelle Majewski's retirement means a great loss for Marian University. We are grateful for her years of dedicated service to the Mission, both as a professor and as President, for thirty-seven years. Her wisdom, passion, and spirit will continue to live on at Marian. We wish her only the best as she transitions."

The Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes offers profound gratitude for President Majewski's exceptional service to Marian University.

Congratulations, Jubilarians!

Each year, CSA celebrates the anniversary of religious profession of sisters and the first commitment of associates.

On June 30, 2024, CSA sisters, associates, families, and friends honored the 12 sister Jubilarians and 11 associate Jubilarians during a joyous Eucharistic Mass held at Holy Family Church in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. Close family and friends joined together for the event with Rev. Carl Diederichs presiding. Sister Anita Henning, CSA, gave the reflection.

The Jubilee Mass, which was livestreamed, can be viewed at www.csasisters.org/jubilee

Collectively the 23 jubilarians represent 930 years of service. Individual profiles for each sister and associate celebrating Jubilee can also be found on the website along with the option to donate to the congregation in their honor.

SISTERS

75 YEARS (1949) ► Sister Carol Geels



70 YEARS (1954) ► (L to R) Sisters Daniel Weinzierl, Lucina Halbur, Lucy Brault, Marie Kees



60 YEARS (1964) ▶

(L to R) Sisters Mary Ann Czaja,
Marilyn Ellickson, Patrice Rog,
Kathleen Delaspina, Angela Behen



50 YEARS (1974) ▶

(L to R) Sisters Anita Henning
and Mary Ann Scherer



ASSOCIATES

25 YEARS (1999) ▶

Mary Beth Wirtz Osiecki

15 YEARS (2009) ▶

Jean Werner, Joanna Schohl, Julie Van Vleet, Kelly
Kohlmann, Kristin Wisnefske, Marie Trebec, Nancy
Fox, Ruth Kohlmann, Frances Grace, Teresa Gill

Front Row: Jean Werner, Kelly Kohlmann,
Ruth Kohlmann, Kristin Wisnefske

Middle Row: Nancy Fox,
Mary Beth Wirtz Osiecki, Julie Van Vleet

Back Row: Joanna Schohl, Marie Trebec



100

Celebrating a *Century*



*O*n June 12, 2024, CSA Associate Frances Grace celebrated her 100th birthday and, just a few weeks later, was celebrated again as a 15-year associate jubilarian.

Frances Grace was born in Yonkers, New York, into the same family as CSA Sisters Emily Schug and Mary Frances Schug. As children, they were taught by Agnesians serving at Sacred Heart Parish. While her siblings felt a vocational call to religious life, Frances felt drawn to learning more about associate relationship after reading “Ordinary Sisters” by Margaret Lorimer, CSA.

During her discernment process, she understood and valued how the CSA Sisters were ever willing to try new ways of fulfilling Jesus’ work in the world. A sister might start with one mission, but realize that the times were calling her to change her approach and respond to the signs of the times. For example, Mother Agnes and her sisters started as teachers, then added the mission of healthcare when it was needed and continued to broaden their areas of service to the world’s needy.

Frances says one of the great blessings for her husband and her was their son Peter, who was born with Downs Syndrome. Peter inspired both of his parents to become involved in work with the disabled. As Frances sought out the special services Peter required, she saw a new mission for herself. Frances formed a group of parents of special needs children who approached doctors and other health professionals about how to give hope to parents confronted with difficult news. Her ministries have included serving as a catechist in the RCIA at Holy Family Parish, visiting and helping residents at St. Francis Home, and assisting at St. Francis Home chapel by giving communion to those less mobile, and serving as a lector and eucharistic minister. Frances currently assists the Associate Office by mailing birthday cards to CSA associates and prayer partners. On her birthday she was thrilled to receive cards of her own. “I got dozens of birthday cards from associates all over the country. What a great surprise!” She celebrated with her five children and their families and then again with sisters and associates all of whom showered her with love.

In Memoriam... Walking with God



Sister Julia Pfeifer, CSA

Sister Julia Pfeifer, CSA, baptized Rose Mary, died May 1, 2024, at Nazareth Center, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. Rose Mary was born in Hyacinth, Kansas, on July 18, 1924. She grew up on a small farm with her twin and fifteen other siblings. After attending Silverdale District 42 rural grade school and earning her high school diploma from Hays High School in Hays, Kansas, she worked at Walker Airforce Base, Walker, Kansas. A shortage of teachers in Ellis County during World War II prompted Rose Mary to enroll at Ft. Hays State College to earn a teaching certificate. She taught for five years in public schools until 1950 when, at the age of twenty-six, she decided to enter St.

Agnes Convent, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. She pronounced her vows as Sister Julia on August 15, 1953.

Sister Julia received her BS in Education from Marian College, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. She ministered as a teacher in Hudson, Wisconsin, and at St. Joseph and Holy Family Orphanages in Michigan. For the next fifty years Sister Julia served as teacher, religious education director, librarian, secretary, pastoral minister, and hospital and nursing home visitor in Illinois, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Kansas. In 2008, she joined the community of sisters at Nazareth Court and Center where she received loving care until her death in 2024.



Sister Michele Welch, CSA

Sister Michele Welch, CSA, (Dorothy Jean) died peacefully June 8, 2024, at Nazareth Center, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. Dorothy was born June 19, 1931, in Fond du Lac, the eldest of seven children. After graduation from St. Joseph's School, the family moved to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where she attended Pius XI High School. Inspired by the sisters who taught her, Dorothy entered St. Agnes Convent in Fond du Lac and professed her vows as Sister Michele on August 15, 1952.

Sister Michele earned a BS in Education from Marian College, Fond du Lac, and a Masters in Teaching Mathematics from Purdue University in Indiana. She was a gifted and beloved educator in elementary and secondary schools in Indiana, Illinois, and New York. However, her years as a high school teacher in Beloit, Wisconsin, Elmhurst, Illinois, and Fond du Lac were her greatest joy. For her last assignment, she taught for 27 years at St. Mary's Springs Math Department and continued there as a tutor until 2020.

Sister Michele was among the first sisters to reside at the newly built CSA motherhouse in 2002. She retired to Nazareth Court and Center in 2023 where she received loving care for her declining health until the time of her death.



Sister Carol Geels, CSA

Sister Carol Geels, baptized Celesta Theresa, was born on October 2, 1928, in Decatur, Indiana. Celesta was educated by the Sisters of St. Agnes at St. Joseph Elementary School and Decatur Catholic High School. Influenced by the joyful spirit of the sisters there and by her aunt, Sister Ernestine Geels, she entered St. Agnes Convent, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, and made her profession of vows August 15, 1949, as Sister Carol.

Sister Carol earned her BS in Elementary and Music Education from Marian College, Fond du Lac, and her MS in Education from Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She furthered her education at St. John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota, Fordham University, Bronx, New York, and St. Mary's University, Winona, Minnesota. For forty-two years, Sister Carol was an elementary school teacher, principal, and music teacher in parish schools in Wisconsin, New York, and Pennsylvania. During her final years of ministry, she taught music at St. John the Baptist School, Jefferson, Wisconsin, and later volunteered at the Monroe Clinic in Monroe, Wisconsin. Throughout her life, Sister Carol served the Sisters of St. Agnes as Apostolic Councilor, Local Coordinator/Administrator at the Motherhouse, and volunteer in the CSA Sponsorship Office, while also assisting with liturgical worship at the motherhouse.

After moving to Nazareth Court and Center, Sister Carol shared her life and her love for music with the sisters there. She died peacefully on June 19, 2024, at Nazareth Court, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.



320 County Road K
Fond du Lac, WI 54937

csasisters.org

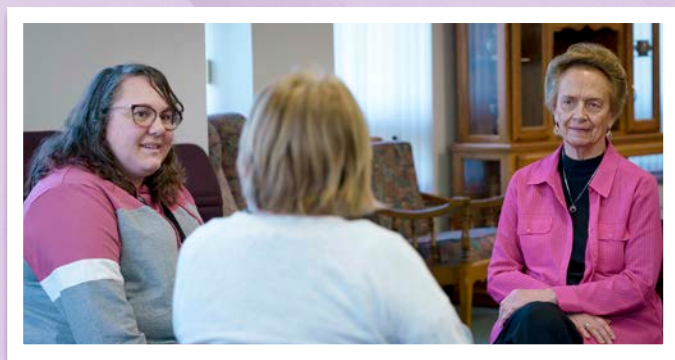


Update your mailing address or
subscription preferences at
csasisters.org/subscriptions

Or email us at **csaadm@csasisters.org**

Or call **920-907-2300**

Fall Engagement *Opportunities*



This fall, consider two opportunities to join in conversation with CSA.

Conversations of the Heart is a six-week in-person series designed to bring people together across differences and discover ways to engage and listen in a way that “creates a politics worthy of the human spirit.”

Sign up at **csasisters.org/unity** by August 16.

Sisters and Seekers is a monthly gathering for those interested in exploring their spiritual journey in a supportive and welcoming community. It is a space of mutual learning and pluralistic thought—not persuasion of belief. There is no deadline to join.

Learn more at **csasisters.org/seekers**