

School Sisters of St. Francis

Mount Assisi Convent
934 Forest Avenue
Pittsburgh PA 15202-1199

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Fields Yield Fresh Food, Fun

Another year of growth – literally and figuratively – is in the books for the Monocacy Farm Project in Bethlehem, Pa., our ministry that provides produce to needy families in Pennsylvania’s Lehigh Valley through partnerships with 10 community organizations.

Thanks to a significant grant and the generosity of numerous corporations and individuals, the farm saw new upgrades this year, including a commercial greenhouse. The 720-square-foot structure makes the farm self-sufficient for growing its own starts and extending the growing season.

A compost-spreader, cutting deck, and a specialized implement for

simultaneously creating raised beds and laying mulch cover were added to enhance the capability and efficiency of the already impressive repertoire of tractor-drawn implements.



In addition, a newly-planted apple orchard, recently added through an Eagle Scout Project, promises to broaden the farm’s produce donations within the next few years.

Work gave way to fun in September when more than 300 people attended the third annual Monocacy Food Fest for family-friendly fun, local artists and musicians, farm demonstrations and, of course, food.

Interested in farming, volunteering or donating to this important ministry? Find out how you can get involved by contacting Sister Bonnie Marie Kleinschuster at bkleinschuster@schoolsistersof.org.

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Winter 2018-2019

Echoes Horizons

across the



The Holy Land



Slovak Republic

Czech Republic

Rome & Assisi

South America

and Australia



Blessings Abroad

Our Sisters Find Faith Around the World



Echoes Across the Horizons is published annually by The School Sisters of St. Francis United States Province.

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ON THE COVER: Our American sisters and their international counterparts on recent adventures in the Slovak Republic, the Czech Republic and Italy.

JOIN US IN THE YEAR AHEAD



CHRISTMAS VESPERS IN BETHLEHEM

Monocacy Manor, 395 Bridle Path Road, Bethlehem Pa. 18017
7 p.m. on Saturday, December 15, 2018
2 p.m. and 7 p.m. on Sunday, December 16, 2018

Join our sisters for this traditional celebration of the Advent season, followed by a reception in the St. Francis Center for Renewal dining hall. To RSVP, call 610-867-8890. Freewill offerings accepted.

MARIAN HALL NIGHT AT THE RACES

Mount Assisi Complex, 1515 Quail Avenue, Pittsburgh Pa. 15202
6 p.m. on Saturday, February 2, 2019

Enjoy a fun evening at the "horse races" while supporting our Marian Hall Home ministry for the elderly. Tickets are \$15 and include food and beer. To inquire, call 412-761-1999. Visit www.marianhall.org in January 2019 for details.



2019 SPRING FLING

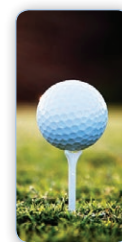
Mount Assisi Complex, 1515 Quail Avenue, Pittsburgh Pa. 15202
12 to 5 p.m. on Sunday, April 28, 2019

This cozier version of our traditional spring festival promises food and fun for everyone with plenty of chances to win great prizes. Join the sisters for dinner, crafts, baked goods, games and beautiful basket raffles. Call 412-761-6004 for more information.

9TH ANNUAL STAR STRUCK GALA & AUCTION

Mullen Hall, 395 Bridle Path Road, Bethlehem, Pa. 18017
6 p.m. on Saturday, May 4, 2019

St. Francis Center for Renewal welcomes you for an elegant evening of dinner, silent auctions and presentation of the 2019 Women of Strength Awards. Visit www.stfrancisctr.org in March 2019 for more details.



21ST ANNUAL MARIAN HALL GOLF OUTING

Pittsburgh North Golf Club in Bakerstown, Pa.
11 a.m. on Saturday, August 24, 2019

Register as an individual or bring a foursome for a fun day on the green, while supporting our Marian Hall Home ministry for the elderly. Call 412-761-1999 or visit www.marianhall.org in June 2019 for detailed information.

4TH ANNUAL MONOCACY FARM FOOD FEST

Monocacy Manor, 395 Bridle Path Road, Bethlehem, Pa. 18017
10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday, September 29, 2019

This all-ages event welcomes families to our Monocacy Farm Project for local artisans, face painting, raffles, farm crafts and activities, a tractor demonstration, farm tours, music and more. Donations of \$5 per person or \$10 per family are recommended.



5TH ANNUAL HOLIDAY CRAFT FAIR & BAKE SALE

Mullen Hall, 395 Bridle Path Road, Bethlehem, Pa. 15017
9 a.m. on Saturday, November 2, 2019

More than 70 area crafters and bakers will show off their wares to create a wall-to-wall marketplace of unique decor, clothing, foods and so much more. Santa and Mrs. Claus will be your hosts for a day filled with the sights, sounds and scents of the holidays.

In Honor and In Memory

The following donations were made between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018 in honor of or in memory of special loved ones:

Remembering

SISTER ANNA MAE KUZMA
Donald Halter

Honoring

Sister Patricia Ann Mahoney
Mary Hamas | Linda Meisner

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Remembering

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Remembering

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Edward A.J. Sedlock | Raymond & Marilyn Shaffer

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Remembering

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Remembering

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Remembering

SISTER IMMACULATA VAVREK
Ray & Phyllis Diroll

PLANNING AHEAD?

Are you interested in including the School Sisters of St. Francis in your will or otherwise leaving a lasting impact on any of our sponsored ministries? Please reach out to our Finance Office at **412-766-7349** for more information.



In Honor and In Memory

The following donations were made between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018 in honor of or in memory of special loved ones:

Remembering **ELVA AMELIO**
Rev. Gary & Linda Walbert

Remembering
SISTER MARTINA ANTELAK
Henry & Carole Sepulveda | Martina Tate

Remembering **MARCELLA ASHLEY**
Laura Ashley

Remembering
SISTER DAMIAN BALOGA
Michael & Colleen Glessner

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Mary Bogle

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SISTER ELECTA BARLOK
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Lawrence Berdis

Honoring **SISTER KEVIN BERDIS**
Lawrence Berdis

Remembering **KATHY MAYER BIBEY**
Paula Barr Majersky

Remembering
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18

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Mary Ann Fischer

Remembering
JAMES & MYRNA GALLAGHER
Florence Sheredy Family

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Rev. Gary & Linda Walbert

Honoring
SISTER FRANCES JACKO
Sharon Krug

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Sharon Krug

Remembering
SISTER GENEVIEVE MARY JURICK
Betty Trepanowski

Remembering **GEORGE KLINE**
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Sisters Marian Sgriccia, Eve Blostic, Frances Jacko (with help from Sister M. Virginelle Makos) and Julia Jacko (with help from Sister Frances Marie Duncan) renew their vows during the celebration in Pittsburgh.

Our 2018 Jubilarians

Nothing signals the start of summer in our community more than the arrival of Jubilee. Celebrations in Pittsburgh and Bethlehem in June shined light on enduring dedication – 455 collective years to be exact – to religious life by seven of our sisters.

Golden Jubilarians **Sisters Marian Sgriccia** and **Eve Blostic** were celebrated, as were **Sisters Francine Garganta** (60th), **Carolyn Mitrichka** and **Amata Shina** (70th), **Frances Jacko** (75th) and **Julia Jacko**, our

eldest member, marking her 80th. Family, friends, clergy and alumnae joined in on this pair of special Saturdays, each including liturgy and dinner.

Our community also paused to remember late **Sisters Mercedes Benko, Eileen Berdis, Mary Ann Busovicki, Barbara Giba, Anna Mae Kuzma, Marcella Meluch** and **Antoinette Popovic**, who would have celebrated jubilees this year.



Sister Frances Jacko – still known to many as Sister Theophane – prays during the Jubilee liturgy at Mount Assisi Convent.



Sister Frances Marie Duncan pins corsages onto Sisters Amata Shina and Carolyn Mitrichka in Bethlehem.



Sister Julia Jacko
80 Years



Sister Frances Jacko
75 Years



Sister Carolyn Mitrichka
70 Years



Sister Amata Shina
70 Years



Sister Francine Garganta
60 Years



Sister Eve Blostic
50 Years



Sister Marian Sgriccia
50 Years

Outreach in the Outback

By Sister Nancy Celaschi

After leading a pilgrimage of administrators from Franciscan schools in Victoria, Australia last year, I was invited to Victoria earlier this year to visit three of the schools. The trip began in the Mornington Peninsula, where we met 360 teachers from Padua College. Founded in 1898, the school has 2,400 students in grades 7 to 12 on three different campuses.

Back in Melbourne, we visited Our Lady of the Nativity (OLN) primary school in Alberfeldie and the neighboring Ave Maria girls' high school. During a rousing afternoon liturgy, we taught the children some songs, and they taught us some, too.

The next day was faculty day with the staff of OLN which was held at the Melbourne Zoo. At lunchtime, I saw my first kangaroos, kookaburras, wombats, and koalas.

After a nice weekend in Melbourne, we headed to Nathalia, stopping along the way in a few picturesque places that reflect the country's diversity. We left the coastline behind, traveled through wine country and continued north into dairy country, several times crossing the largest river in Oceania, the Murray River.

On Monday we visited St. Mary of the Angels School and St. Francis Primary School. Nathalia is a town of about 1,400 people, yet 600 students attend the high school. They come on foot and on 10 buses from five parishes in 20 different towns, some commuting an hour each way.

Back in Melbourne, I visited Assisi College in Queensland, a K-12 diocesan school. Its patrons are Saints Francis and Clare, and the buildings have names like Gubbio, Greccio, Orvieto and Cortona. This is the first Australian school to have pilgrimages as part of its curriculum.

Of course, it was not all work and no play. My hosts took me to see the gorgeous coastline and on a whale-watching expedition. It was great fun.

Sister Nancy and friends share time with students at St. Mary of the Angels School in Nathalia, Australia.



TRAVELOGUE | Chilean Culture

Sister Pat (center) enjoys a cookout with our sisters in Chile. "The foods there are very different, but very good," she says.

Hola, Chile!

By Sister Patricia Ann Mahoney

This fall I visited with our sisters in Vina del Mar, Chile for a Spanish-language immersion experience. The journey strengthened the conversational skills I use in my ministry with Spanish-speaking parishioners in the Diocese of Pittsburgh.

Situated in the middle of the city, our convent in Vina del Mar is part of the Hugo Errasuriz Elementary School complex, where our sisters have served in various capacities over the past 71 years. Four of our Chilean sisters minister there currently in administrative and pastoral positions. I was warmly welcomed at the school, visiting various classrooms and working with two teachers to improve my language skills. The students also were very helpful – from them I learned some Spanish, and from me they learned some English!

I also visited our sisters in Placilla, where we have Collegio Santa Clara, which includes an elementary school and a high school. Our third

Sister Pat visits the port in Vina del Mar where our sisters first arrived by boat in 1947 to begin our ministry in Chile.



IN FOND MEMORY | MAY THEY REST IN PEACE

Sister Electa Barlok, OSF

January 11, 1932
February 17, 2018

Born in Cementon, Pa., Sister Electa entered our community in 1949 from Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Northampton, Pa., making first vows in 1951 and final vows in 1956. She attended Mount Mercy College and held degrees from Seton Hall University, Villanova University and St. Charles Seminary.

Sister taught elementary and middle school in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, as well as Latin, German, English, art and religion at St. Francis Academy in Bethlehem, Pa.

In 2010, Sister Electa relocated from Bethlehem to Pittsburgh, Pa., where she joyfully assisted the elder sisters with correspondence, worked in the convent library and, above all, prayed for anyone in need. Sister loved to sing, and did so with her whole heart and soul, especially during liturgies and communal prayers.

Energized by time with friends or children, Sister loved to watch *Home Improvement*, read mysteries, knit and eat chocolate. Her spirit of creativity, joy and deep gratitude will live on with all who knew her.



S. Antoinette Popovic, OSF

October 21, 1919
January 26, 2018

Born in Lyndora, Pa., Sister Antoinette entered our community in 1937 from St. John Nepomucene Parish, making first vows in 1938 and final vows in 1944.

With degrees from Carlow College and Duquesne University, Sister taught the elementary and middle grades at schools in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Texas. Later she was involved in arts and crafts, cared for the elderly in Marian Hall Home and worked for many years at Mount Assisi Academy Preschool.

Sister enjoyed watching the news and couldn't resist chocolate or Lays potato chips. She excelled at cooking and baking, especially her special-recipe nut and apricot horns. Sister loved children and is remembered for her helpfulness and peaceful presence. "If she promised to pray for you, she prayed," remembers one of our sisters. "She was very faithful to her God, her vocation and her life of prayer."



Sister Rene Parent, OSF

September 24, 1943
September 30, 2018

Born in Lawrence, Mass., Sister Rene entered our community from Sacred Heart Parish in Springfield, Mass., making first vows in 1963 and final vows in 1968. She earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Holy Family College in Philadelphia, Pa.

Sister taught at various elementary schools in New Jersey and Pennsylvania and ministered at St. Francis Center for Renewal in Bethlehem, Pa., for 29 years. Her welcoming manner drew people to her, especially visitors to the Center, who always looked forward to seeing her.

An avid and entertaining juggler, Sister Rene is best remembered for her patience and unwavering listening ear. Whether it was a simple greeting or a lengthy heart-to-heart chat, Sister made others feel comfortable enough to open up to her and ministered by listening. Likewise, she usually had sage advice to offer in return and would often pass along favorite sayings – some she collected and some she penned herself – to inspire others.

Sister Marie Glodava, OSF

April 24, 1937
August 13, 2018

Born in Clifton, N.J., Sister Marie entered our community in 1953 from SS. Cyril and Methodius Parish in Clifton, making first vows in 1955 and final vows in 1960. She attended classes at Mount Mercy College, held a certificate in nursery school education from Seton Hall University and a bachelor's degree in education from Holy Family College.

Sister taught elementary and middle school grades in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Massachusetts, then spent many years working with preschool and kindergarten children and as an administrative assistant.

Sister loved to watch game shows, *The Sound of Music* and *The Fiddler on the Roof*. She enjoyed Slovak food, ice cream, cookies, and spending time with family, friends and her community. Her hobbies included traveling, long walks, listening to music and reading biographies.

Her love of Christ and the community showed in all she did, in school with the little children she dearly loved, and among the sisters with whom she lived.



Sister Frances Pastusek, OSF

August 5, 1928
October 10, 2018

Born in Perth Amboy, N.J., Sister Frances entered our community in 1947 from Holy Trinity Church in the Trenton Diocese, making first vows in 1949 and final vows in 1954. She held a bachelor's degree in education from Seton Hall University and a master's degree in library science from Villanova University.

Sister spent many years as an educator and, later, served in religious education, pastoral ministry, outreach to the poor and as a librarian in several locations.

Sister Frances was a hardworking, organized person who would often rearrange a closet or pantry on a whim, leaving little notes so others could decipher her latest organizing scheme.

She is remembered for her relentless energy, yet peaceful presence. Sister savored time among God's people and sharing stories of those she encountered. She was truly happy in her life as a ministry partner with Christ.

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Sisters Marguerite Stewart, Bernadine Marie Stemnock and Rosaria Shina enjoy the 2018 Star Struck Gala at St. Francis Center for Renewal.

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convent is in Pena Blanca, a more rural area, where they have orange, lemon and olive trees.

The Franciscan spirit in our schools is very evident, as the student greeting at every class is "Paz y bien" (peace and all good) and the bulletin boards feature images of St. Francis in many places. The teachers seem very familiar with our congregation's charm and history, and everywhere I went, I felt very at home.

Among the highlights of my trip were seeing the sun rise over the Andes as my plane landed in Santiago; looking out for the first time over the Pacific Ocean, which is about 15 minutes from our convent in Vina del Mar; and watching our primary level students - all dressed up as "characters" from St. Francis' *Canticle of the Creatures* - portray scenes from the *Canticle* and the life of St. Francis on the day after his feast.

The whole experience was a blessing, for which I am most grateful. So as I said "Adios, Chile," I also added, "Que Dios te bendiga!" May God bless you, all the people of Chile!



TOP: Sister Pat shares a smile with a Chilean lay teacher who helped her with her Spanish. ABOVE: The first group of our sisters to minister in Chile in the 1940s.

Sister Elaine Hromulak (third from left) and a team of volunteer seamstresses sort and pack some 600 handmade dresses for distribution to needy children around the world.



SEWING FOR SMILES

In the 2016 edition of *Echoes Across the Horizon*, we told you about Sister Elaine Hromulak's efforts with the *Little Dresses Project*, and the response was overwhelming. Here's further proof that sometimes the simplest things make the biggest difference.

It's become tradition, that one week each year where Sister Elaine Hromulak can barely be seen peeking from behind hulking stacks of patterned fabrics, as she and a few volunteers sort, size and pack generous piles of little dresses. Each was made lovingly by a volunteer seamstress who sat down at her sewing machine countless times over the course of the year, motivated by bringing a smile to the face of an impoverished child she will never meet.

Since 2016, when word went out that Sister Elaine was ramping up her efforts with the *Little Dresses Project*, she has been contacted by ladies all around the country who want to help, either by sewing or donating supplies. Calls came from women in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Virginia, South Carolina, Texas and New Jersey who made dresses for their children when they were little; from those who had boxes of material in their closets and under their beds from those early years of sewing; and from some who were not seamstresses or who could no longer sew but wanted to send money, supplies, bows, lace, appliques and craft store gift cards.

The result was 600 handmade dresses ready by Spring 2018 that have found their way to missions in Peru, South Africa, India, the Slovak Republic, Haiti, Santo Domingo and hurricane-ravaged Puerto Rico. One volunteer even distributed dresses during her Amazon River cruise.

"Our success is due to God's providence and the generosity of the people who have given their time or resources," says Sister Elaine. "Because of them, 600 impoverished little girls all over the world have a beautiful new dress and new hope!"

If you'd like to get involved either by sewing or donating, please contact Sister Elaine at 412-715-8575.

Where Jesus Walked

By Sister Nancy Celaschi

Pope Paul VI is credited with first calling the Holy Land "The Fifth Gospel," and anyone who goes there on pilgrimage soon learns how true this is. I was privileged to visit with 18 other men and women and our two pilgrim guides.

Nazareth

From the airport we headed north into Galilee, stopping for Mass and dinner at Mt. Carmel on the way to Nazareth. That evening we arrived in Nazareth and went to the first in a series of pilgrim hostels. When I opened the door of my bedroom, I saw the most beautiful sight – the Basilica of the Annunciation bathed in light, right across the street.

While in Nazareth we visited excavations beneath the Basilica, the Church of St. Joseph, and traveled to Cana, Capernaum, Mount Tabor, the Sea of Galilee, and the Mount of the Beatitudes. We also visited Banias, which the Romans called Caesarea Philippi, at the headwaters of the Jordan River, and sailed across the Sea of Galilee. Whether these sites are backed by 2000 years of tradition or merely commemorate the Gospel story, the reading of

the Good News in these places added to my understanding and appreciation of it.

Jordan

Although I had visited Israel before, I had never been to Jordan, which was one of the reasons I asked to make this pilgrimage. The friars recently built a new church on the summit of Mount Nebo, on the remains of a fourth-century Basilica. Both the church and the view from the place – where tradition holds that Moses saw the Promised Land – seized my eyes and heart beyond words.

We traveled on to Madaba and, before returning to Israel, stopped at what was, for me, the most memorable moment of the journey. On the Jordanian side of the Jordan River we left our bus and trekked over the plain to a backwater of the Jordan

River which, since the 4th Century, claims to be Bethany in Jordan, where Jesus went because John was baptizing there.

Archaeological evidence attests to the long history of this site, where the Jordan is very narrow and we could see and hear the people on the Israeli side. Due to irrigation, the Jordan is no longer the mighty river it was in history, but Jordanian troops standing guard turned on the pump to bring filtered Jordan water into the large, ancient basin. After renewing our Baptismal promises, we affirmed our commitment with that water.

The Dead Sea

Before heading on to Bethlehem, we visited the Dead Sea and toured Qumran and Masada. Yes, there was an opportunity to swim – or rather float – in the Dead Sea. As I stood on the shore, I checked the altimeter on my phone, which indicated I was at about 423 meters below sea level. We took the cable car to the top of Masada and, once again, I checked the altimeter. Looking down at the Dead Sea way below us, I discovered that I was only 58 meters above sea level. Looks are deceiving.

On the way to Bethlehem, we stopped in Bethany; and



A look inside the ancient church of the Annunciation, erected over a house built into the hillside. According to tradition, this was the home of Miryam in Nazareth. The star in the ground bears the inscription "HERE the Word was made flesh."

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There's still plenty of time to answer our 2018 Annual Appeal, *Serving God's People*, and make a contribution to support the good works of the School Sisters of St. Francis. Mail your donation before June 30, 2019 to be listed in next year's edition of *Echoes Across the Horizons*. Thank you, and God bless you.



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Sisters Beena Jose, Gracy Kundukulam, Karen Buco, Norberta Kralosky and Roselyn Kuzma take part in fun team-building activities during our 2018 Provincial Gathering this summer.

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several of us braved the descent into what tradition claims is the Tomb of Lazarus. Standing inside the tomb, which is on solid ground but approximately two stories below the modern street level, our guide explained the account of the raising of Lazarus in the context of the burial customs of that day.

Bethlehem

On my previous trip to Israel it was difficult getting into Palestinian territories, so we managed to spend an hour in Bethlehem on Good Friday morning. This time we stayed there and were privileged to have Mass in the Grotto of the Manger, right next to the Grotto of the Nativity. Later we went out to Shepherd's Field, a lovely place that commemorates and highlights the emotions the shepherds experienced – their fear, their amazement and, ultimately, their great joy.

Jerusalem

Our last days were spent in Jerusalem with visits to Bethphage, the Mount of the Ascension, the Garden of Olives, the Cenacle, the Western Wall, the place of Mary's Dormition. We

were scheduled to have Adoration on Thursday night in the Garden of Gethsemane with two other groups, but they failed to show. To our delight, we had the whole Basilica of the Nations to ourselves.

Our last day in Jerusalem began with a visit to Calvary and early morning Mass in the Tomb. Later that day, we prayed the Stations of the Cross along the Via Dolorosa. We are used to praying the Stations in nice, quiet churches, but that day we prayed on a narrow, busy street with shop owners selling their wares. Of course, we would consider this disrespectful, but were reminded that this is exactly what Jesus would have experienced as he carried His cross to Golgotha.

With a little free time in the afternoon, we visited the Russian Orthodox Church of St. Alexander Nevsky. There, in the 1880s, they discovered that some of the walls of the church were built over parts of the Constantinian Basilica, Herodian structures, and

even the city wall. Next to a large archway there is a smaller one, which some claim was for travelers to enter the city once the gates were closed. With some climbing and contortions, we were able to pass through "the Eye of the Needle."

As I sit in Rome and look back over the pilgrimage, the places I've seen and the Scriptures we heard proclaimed there come back to my mind's eye with such vividness. It was, indeed, a grace to be able to walk where Jesus walked, and to see the skies, clouds, rolling hills and the steep slopes he knew when he walked on this Holy Land.

Sister Nancy serves on the administrative staff of Franciscan Pilgrimage Programs, which has guided more than 20,000 pilgrims from 45 countries on pilgrimage.

The Sea of Galilee as seen from the window of the Church of the Primacy of Peter where, according to tradition, the post-resurrection Jesus cooked and served a lovely fish breakfast to the Apostles.

A view inside the tomb in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.



Let Marian Hall Chase the Chill

The perennial Soup Sale at Marian Hall Home in Pittsburgh is in full swing with more soup varieties than ever. The sale runs weekly through April 12, 2019. Each week, three soup varieties are offered – each for \$5 per quart – with flavors repeating every six weeks.



This year's flavors include Chicken Noodle, Pasta Fagoli, Vegetable, Chicken Rice, Stuffed Pepper, New England Clam Chowder, Chicken Dumpling, Italian Sausage, Potato, Chicken Tortellini, Italian Wedding, Tomato Florentine, Chicken Tortilla, Chili and Broccoli Cheese. For a printable week-by-week listing of flavors, visit www.marianhall.org.

To order, call 412-761-6004 by 12 p.m. each Thursday, then pick up your order beginning at 1 p.m. on Friday. Please note that due to holiday schedules, no sales will be conducted on November 23, 2018 (Thanksgiving), December 28, 2018 (Christmas), or January 4, 2019 (New Year's).

Proceeds benefit programs for the elderly at Marian Hall Home, one of our sponsored ministries.



Bishop Alfred Schlert leads a 70th Anniversary Mass of Thanksgiving at St. Francis Center for Renewal. Below: Sister M. Virginelle Makos addresses those gathered for the celebration.

Renewal Center Marks 70 Years

St. Francis Center for Renewal (SFCR) had a busy, celebratory year in 2018, with a full slate of events to mark the ministry's 70th anniversary as an oasis of peace in Pennsylvania's Lehigh Valley.

From the Star Struck Gala in May – which led patrons on a sentimental journey back to the Center's origins in the 1940s – to special speakers and a Mass of Thanksgiving in October, it was truly a year of celebration.

The ministry marches on into 2019 with a full menu of programming. Twilight



Retreats, weekend retreats, Days of Reflection, film viewings and more fill up the calendar ahead.

Highlights include SFCR's annual Women's Spirituality Weekend Retreat in January, the ninth annual Star Struck Gala and a visit from **Most. Rev. Alfred Schlert**, bishop of the Diocese of Allentown, in May; and the popular Holiday Craft Fair & Bake

Sale in November.

For detailed program information or to bring your group to the Center, please visit www.stfrancisctr.org or call 610-867-8890.

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Please visit our website and follow us on social media to learn more about our community and share in our everyday good works:

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Our Gracious Donors

Please note that this listing includes only donations received between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018.

It is with deep gratitude that we acknowledge and thank you, our generous donors, for your contributions. Only with your help are we able to continue our ministries. Therefore, you share with us in spreading the Gospel and building up God's Kingdom. Thank you for your support, and may God continue to bless you.

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Noteworthy

News & Notables from the Past Year



RENEWING THE SPIRIT

The Diocese of San Angelo, Texas, lauded the integral work of **Sisters Hilda Marotta** and **Adelina Garcia** in implementing the *RENEW International* programs there. The programs foster spiritual renewal in the Catholic tradition by empowering individuals and communities to encounter God in everyday life, deepen and share faith, and connect faith with action.



THE RIGHT ROAD

The City Council of Erie, Pa., named the 1100th Block of E. 9th Street as **Sister Kevin Berdis Way**, recognizing Sister's 19 years as principal of Holy Family School, which formerly occupied 1153 E. 9th Street. Sister was the last sister to minister as a principal in Erie in 161 years of continuous service by women religious there.

Sister Marie Therese Sherwood and the administrative team at St. Matthias Catholic Community in Somerset, N.J. offered drive-thru ashes on Ash Wednesday. The team



welcomed more than 520 cars in a mile-long line during the evening rush hour. The concept was popular with busy members of the workforce and even with elderly and disabled parishioners who were able to receive a blessing and ashes from the comfort of their cars.



SPRING FLING FUN

Our first Spring Fling, a smaller version of our traditional Spring Festival, drew hundreds of patrons to Mount Assisi Convent in April. Our guests enjoyed delicious dinners, baked goods made with love by our sisters, and a stunning basket raffle.



SO MUCH TO SHARE

A group of second- and third-graders from St. Elizabeth Regional School in Whitehall, Pa., visited Monocacy Manor this spring to spend time with our senior sisters. It was a wonderful opportunity for them to meet each other and for our sisters – all retired teachers – to be with children again

The Pittsburgh Catholic newspaper tooted **Sister JoAnn Knaebel's** horn when it ran a feature



story about her in May. The story highlighted Sister's role as a flutist with the North Suburban Symphonic Band.

Sisters Pat Brennan and **Barbara Brown** attended the 2018 Franciscan Federation Conference in June in Buffalo, N.Y. The theme, *Franciscans and Muslims: Lessons from the Past and Prospects for the Future*, was especially timely, as September marked 800 years since Francis met Sultan Malik al Kamil in Damietta, Egypt.



Sisters Adelina Garcia, Patricia Ann Mahoney and **Jeanne Marie Ulica** took part in the International Formators' Renewal Program in July in Rome. Along with workshops on the challenges of spiritual formation in today's world, they interacted with sisters from other provinces and toured Assisi and La Verna.

Sister Frances Marie Duncan was honored by St. Peter's Prep in New Jersey in October. The Legends of Prep event celebrates those who have had a profound positive impact upon the school. Sister taught math and chemistry at Prep for 20 years and still serves on the school's Board of Trustees. In May, Sister Frances Marie also was honored as a *Woman of Strength* at St. Francis Center for Renewal's Star Struck Gala.



Also in October, **Sister Regina Ann Rokosny** was honored for her many years of dedicated service to St. Francis Retreat House in Easton, Pa.



TRAVELOGUE | A Visit to Our International Provinces

A Dream Comes True

By Sister Georgette Dublino

Putting our enrichment funds from the generalate and province to good use, **Sister Mary Lou Metro** and I traveled abroad this summer to meet the sisters in our Slovak and Czech Provinces and to spend time with our sisters in Italy.

We've always read and heard about the important beginnings and places in our congregation's history, but to be there and to spend time with our sisters was a blessed experience.

We began our sightseeing at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, where the body of St. John XXIII is encased in glass under one of the many altars. We were present at the General Audience of **Pope Francis** and the Solemn Mass of SS. Peter and Paul.

A thrilling part of our trip was four days spent with our sisters in Slovakia. We began in Bratislava, where we had a wonderful time exchanging stories with the sisters there. At the mission in Žilina, we delivered handmade children's dresses crafted by our own **Sister Elaine Hromulak** and her network of volunteer seamstresses for the needy children there.

Sister Regina Žuk-Olszewska translated for us and, along with **Sister Rafaela Zvrškovcová**, provincial of the Slovak Province, drove us to Graz, Austria, to meet the sisters from our original foundation. What an honor it was to visit the burial place of our foundress, **Mother Antonia Lampel**, and to see how Graz has grown.

From Graz, we traveled to Brno, Czech Republic, where we met **Sister Imelda Hrdličková**, our translator, and **Sister Zdislava Nosková**,

who shared stories about **Sister Eliška Pretschnerová**, a former general minister who saw our sisters through the struggles of Communism and for whom our order has embarked on the beatification process (see Pages 10-11).

The next day we were on our way to Slatiňany for a wonderful visit with our sisters in Prague. They showed us their former school building that was seized by Communists between 1948 and 1968 and was returned in terrible condition. To this day, it requires much repair to be sold.

From there we were off to Koječín, where Sister Eliška rebuilt an abandoned castle to provide for sisters who had to leave their

convents during Communism. We stayed at our Motherhouse in Prague and visited the Křestánský domov mládeže hostel, which was established for young women by Sister Eliška.

We closed our trip with time at our Generalate in Rome, experiencing different sights and events with **Sister Jeanne Marie Ulica** as our guide and companion. We also visited Francis' beloved Assisi and the Padre Pio Shrine.

What a wonderful experience it was! The warmth and welcome of the sisters in all our international provinces was a true experience of Fraternitas in our Franciscan community.



ABOVE: Sisters Georgette (front left) and Mary Lou (front right) surrounded by the warmth of our sisters in the Czech Republic. RIGHT: Visiting impoverished Gypsy children in Lomnička.





Sisters Roselyn Kuzma and Lorita Kristufek enjoy a rooftop view of Prague during their Eastern European adventure in May.



Among the artifacts on display were a letter and postcard that Sister Roselyn received from Sister Eliška.



Sisters Roselyn and Lorita visit Sister Eliška's grave in Prague.



Sister Lorita tries her hand at a very old pump organ from the chapel at the Křesťanský domov mládeže hostel in Prague.

Pilgrimage of Honor

*Sisters Lorita Kristufek and Roselyn Kuzma traveled to Prague in May 2018 to attend the International Conference for the Beatification of **Sister Eliška Pretschnerová**. Prior to her death in 1993, Sister Eliška served as a multi-term general minister of our international congregation, seeing our sisters through the horrors of Communism in Europe. Here, Sisters Lorita and Roselyn share the highlights of their time abroad.*

As soon as we arrived in Prague on May 13, we were warmly greeted by our sisters and, that very evening, joined a group of young men and women to pray for vocations, as they do every Monday. The next few days found us at gravesites and churches, including the Capuchin Monastery and the Infant of Prague. At the Vltava River in Prague, the Charles Bridge and all its beautiful statues made for wonderful sightseeing.



A painting of Sister Eliška by Sister Jo Goolish of our U.S. Province.

In the early morning of May 19, we boarded a bus to Hradec Králové, where the International Conference for Beatification was held. **Sister Zdislava Nosková**, postulator for Sister Eliška's cause, warmly greeted us. In the current stage of the lengthy and intense beatification process, Sister Zdislava is charged with collecting from those who encountered Sister Eliška testimony to serve as evidence of her holiness.

The large room was filled with lay people and many sisters from the Czech and Slovak Provinces. A Sister from Gratz, Austria, also attended and shared her testimony.

There were many speakers and also a play of Sister Eliška's life presented by young professional actors. As witnesses of Sister Eliška's process, we were asked to share our personal stories with members of the Tribunal. It was a real honor to share in the cause of our dear Sister Eliška.

The next day, we traveled to Slatiňany for a special Mass and brunch on the Feast of Pentecost. On a long hall were pictures depicting Sister Eliška's life. Sister Roselyn was delighted to see among the artifacts a letter and card she'd received from Sister and seven pictures she took while visiting with her in 1987 in Hoješín, Czech Republic.

The group then went to Sister Eliška's gravesite, where the sisters prayed and sang. We drove to the churches of her Baptism and First Communion, as well as to the primary school she attended. We then said our goodbyes, and the Slovak sisters took Sister Roselyn to Slovakia to visit her cousins. Her grandmother came to America in

1902 before her baby brother John was born. Her grandmother never returned to Slovakia, and John never came to America so the siblings never met. Sister Roselyn bridged the gap more than a century later by staying at the family home of John's son, Stefan.

Sister Lorita did some visiting, as well, with family in the village of Blatnička in Moravia. Sister first spent time with Sister Eliška in 1974 while Sister Eliška was under house arrest during Communism. At that time, Sister Lorita took her grandmother, **Agnes Marek Kristufek**, to visit family she hadn't seen in 61 years!

Living and praying with our sisters and family members and taking part in the beautification process of Sister Eliška will always be a gift to remember. We will always be deeply grateful to our congregation for this privileged time of pilgrimage with our sisters in the Czech and Slovak Provinces.



Who Was Sister Eliška?

Born in 1911 in Czechoslovakia, Anna Pretschnerová made vows in 1932 and was given the name Sister Eliška. Her education was halted in 1945 when Communist forces closed the Second World War College, but she managed to continue her studies by other means. During the rise of Communism and the forced internment of religious and seizure of their properties, Sister worked openly as a nurse and clandestinely as a leader to help others keep faith. When interrogated by the occupying regime, she accepted all blame for forbidden religious activities.

Sister was appointed provincial leader in 1954 and, during temporary liberation in the late 1960s, she helped to establish the Secretariat of the Religious Communities and pioneer liturgical reform. In 1970, she began two terms as General Superior of our international congregation and, upon return to her home country, again was subjected to humiliating interrogations. The Vatican managed to convince state officials to let her return to Rome to serve. Sister died in 1993, and the beatification process began in 2001.