

Alive

WITH THE CALL OF THE GOSPEL



- Rediscovering Musical Treasures
- Healing the Sick in Guatemala
- Welcoming New Vocations in India
- Chapel Garden Apartments Open

St. Joseph's *Inspiring Witness*

BY SISTER RITA EBLE

St. Joseph, the patron saint of our Convent Chapel in Erlenbad, Germany, is our daily companion and has guided our community in all significant events and decisions. St. Joseph lived his vocation as the husband of Mary, the Mother of God, and as the nurturing father of Jesus. He is also a role model of our vocation as women religious, we who “seek the will of God in all circumstances and events, discerning the signs of the times, responding faithfully in the spirit of St. Francis and our foundresses.” (*Response in Faith*, 16.1)

The gospel accounts of St. Joseph can inform our own lives of faithfulness. When Joseph learned of Mary's pregnancy (Mt 1:19), he mindfully followed his inner voice. He said yes to God's call. I can learn to follow the inner voice that says, “Have faith! I have great plans for you.” I will receive guidance if I am silent and listen to God, who walks with me and can shed new light on what is happening.

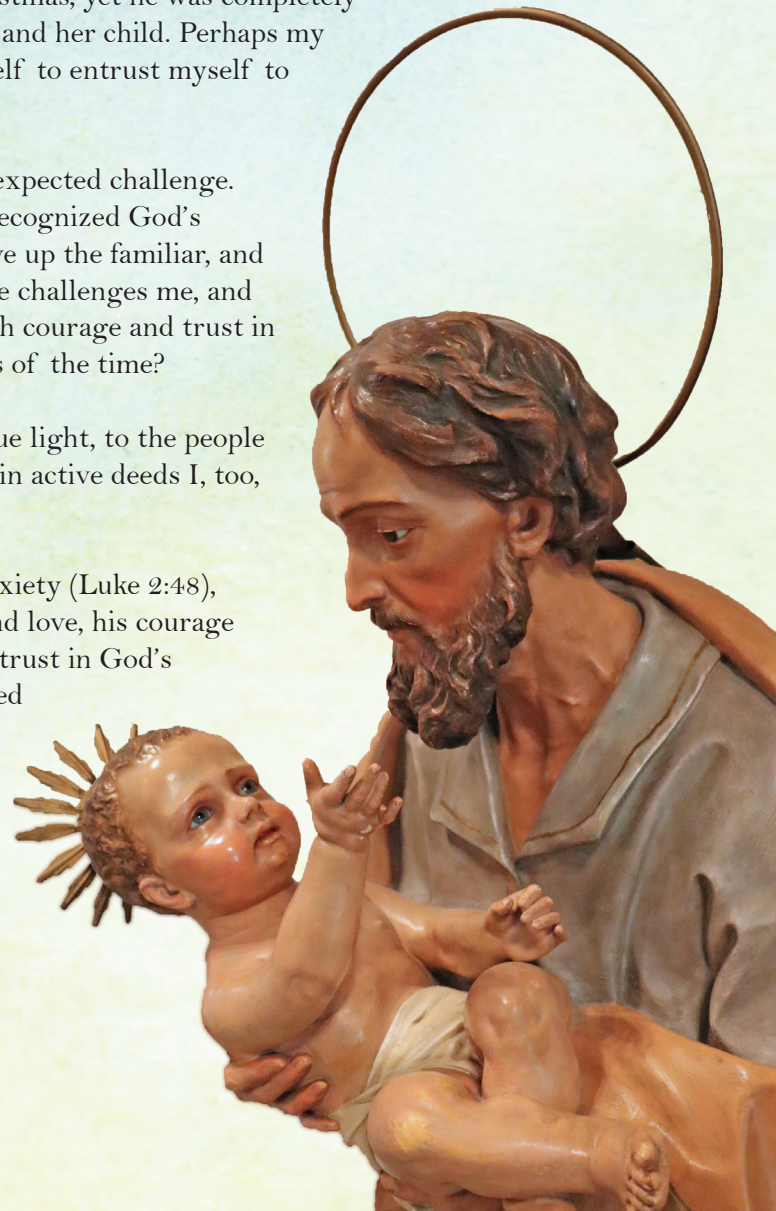
Joseph is almost always depicted on the sidelines at Christmas, yet he was completely involved, patient, trusting in his relationship with Mary and her child. Perhaps my prayer experience is similar to Joseph's. Can I open myself to entrust myself to God in patient openness and in prayerful readiness?

When Herod sought Jesus' life, Joseph faced another unexpected challenge. In the inner voice that spoke to him in a dream, Joseph recognized God's guidance. It gave him the strength to leave his home, give up the familiar, and expose himself to uncertainty. When an uncertain future challenges me, and the time comes to let go of the familiar, will I follow with courage and trust in God's guidance? Can I be present and listen to the needs of the time?

Joseph, the carpenter of Nazareth, brought Jesus, the true light, to the people in silence and in acts of love. In silent contemplation or in active deeds I, too, can be a joyful witness of God's presence in the world.

When Jesus' parents were looking for him with great anxiety (Luke 2:48), we also observe Joseph's thoughtfulness, his calmness and love, his courage to make clear decisions, sustained by faith and rooted in trust in God's promise. May I also know that I am carried and supported by God's love when I face life's unresolved questions or uncertainties.

SISTER RITA EBLE is the Provincial of our congregation's European Province.



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FRONT COVER
Music Archivist Dr. Sheri Masiakowski (right)
and Sister Mary Jane Wagner, the community's
Director of Music Ministry, review one of Sister
Theophane Hytrek's original organ manuscripts.
Sheri is seated in the choir loft of St. Joseph
Chapel at the three-manual, 35-rank Casavant
organ, which was installed in the chapel in 1981.

PHOTO: KATIE LOVE
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From Our Leadership

The sisters of our congregation are preparing to celebrate the 150th anniversary of its founding. It gives us great joy to look back on these many years and to know that we have been blessed along the way by your presence as companions on this gospel journey.

Our congregation's charism, articulated as part of our Congregational Direction, is a gift from God for the church and the world that directs our presence in people's lives. It reads, "Our charism is to discern the will of God in the needs of the times, responding wherever the Spirit leads us."

St. Francis and St. Clare, and our foundresses – Mother Alexia, Mother Alfons, and Sister Clara – continue to guide our steps on this sacred journey. St. Joseph, too, has interceded at important moments in the life of our congregation, as patron, guide, and loving father. In this issue of *Alive*, Sister Rita Eble of our European Province offers a reflection on our patron saint, who remains our exemplar of steadfast love.

Mother Alexia spoke of many dreams, and she followed her dreams to distant countries and areas that she had never explored. Even in the midst of a world war, global hunger, and ecclesial and political challenges, her vision came to life.

*"Impossible –
this is a word I do not know."*

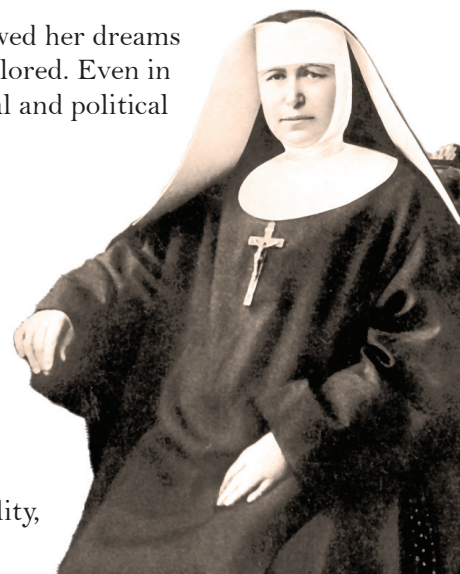
~ MOTHER ALEXIA HOELL

Today, our charism is woven throughout our many ministries. We are initiating and nurturing pastoral missions, educational institutions, and social service programs. We celebrate accomplishments in spirituality, art and music, and are enlivened by a passion for justice, peace, and care for creation.

Loving service cannot be measured in minutes, hours, days, or decades. Rather, we can measure the true impact of our congregation's 150 years only by appreciating the thousands of women who devoted their lives to serving God. We express our gratitude for the past, even as we focus on bringing the profound claims of the gospel into the present with confidence, and embracing the future with hope.

Sisters Deborah, Tresa Abraham, Matilde, and Jincy

International Leadership Team
School Sisters of St. Francis



Reviving a Vibrant Musical Heritage

Music Archivist makes “lost” compositions available to all



Sister Theophane Hytrek

The School Sisters of St. Francis have a vast collection of music that our sisters composed over the course of more than a century. Many of these unpublished works have been stored for decades within the School Sisters of St. Francis' archives.

Last year, Dr. Sheri L. Masiakowski began preserving, preparing, and publishing musical works of our sisters in her new role as the community's Music Archivist. Sheri uncovered several of these unpublished manuscripts while completing research for her doctoral dissertation on the solo works of Sister Theophane Hytrek, an internationally renowned recitalist and composer who started teaching at Alverno College in 1941.

This newly established Heritage Music Collection is a catalog of manuscripts which currently include a vocal/choir piece, an organ/flute/schola composition, and several organ works by Sister Theophane. So far, Sheri has published six pieces for musicians to preview and purchase, including audio samples and sheet music. The latest is an organ/vocal solo/choir piece titled *Sophonia*, which includes a stunning audio recording with

Heritage Room to Showcase Community's History

The School Sisters of St. Francis Archives is now undertaking the creation of an interactive learning experience that will showcase the history of the congregation through a variety of photos, multimedia, and artifacts. This exhibit will be on display in the newly remodeled Heritage Room, located on the second floor of St. Joseph Center, just outside St. Joseph Chapel.

The interactive learning experience will allow visitors to gain a new understanding of the breadth and depth of the sisters' ministries since 1874. Archivist TaraDawn Knull said visitors will also learn of the deep, strong roots that set the foundation for the congregation's present and future.

Watch for a more detailed feature about the Heritage Room as the project nears completion this October.

the late Sister Marie Gnader as vocalist.

Sheri's goal is to publish one composition each month. Several intermediate-difficulty organ pieces, originally published in the 1950s, are now out of print; her intent is for those pieces to debut in late 2023. "These organ pieces are useful in liturgical settings," Sheri said. "We will also share the Blessing of St. Francis, which is sung at many of our sisters' liturgies and events."

Relevant Today, and Historically Significant

"The preservation of these creative works, their publication, and bringing the music back to the mainstream are the focus for this collection," Sheri said. "The contributions of our sisters are not only historical, but also very useful."

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the congregation invited John Singenberger, a well-known composer, music teacher, editor, and publisher, to teach the sisters music. His work helped prepare many sisters to produce what are now considered "gems" in the community's collection.

"My hope is to revive the vibrance our music received at the time of its creation," Sheri said. "Our sister composers were a driving force throughout the community's history. They were church musicians and teachers who composed music to meet the needs of parishes and students. Those needs continue, whether they are modern or Gregorian chant-based."

On a day-to-day basis, Sheri brings the music of our deceased sisters back to life as she organizes and catalogues their musical works, given to her by TaraDawn Knull, the community's Archivist.

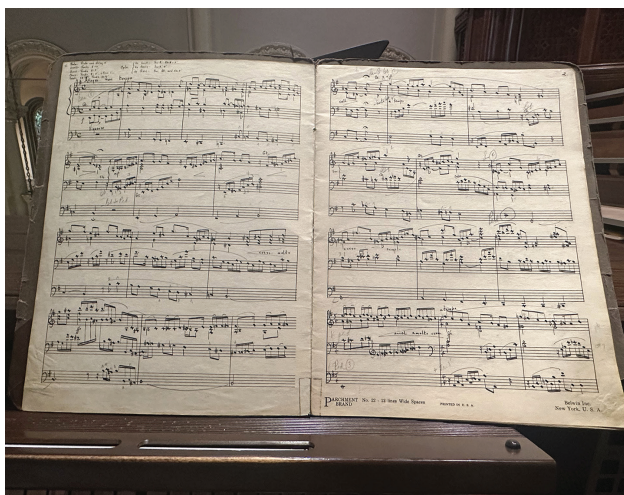
"Paper copies of all these documents are necessary, but archiving also involves the [slow] process of scanning them and digitizing our sound files," Sheri said. "I spend as much time as possible reviewing the many materials in our collection. We are happy to also access the collection in the Alverno College archives, which complements our own."

"Unlike private individuals, whose work is often lost after they pass away, the School Sisters of St. Francis are well aware of the value in preserving our history in the works of each sister," Sheri noted.

The best way to give life to our sisters' work is by word-of-mouth, Sheri said. "Talk about this music with your parish musician, choir director, piano teacher, or school music teacher," she said. To stay abreast of new additions to the Heritage Music Collection catalogue, visit the Music

Ministry section (located under "Our Global Impact") on our website: www.sssf.org.

If you studied at Alverno and have music scores composed by our sisters in your personal library, please prayerfully consider donating them to the music archives when you feel ready. Sheri may be contacted at smasiakowski@sssf.org.





Mrs. Sandhya, a special educator teacher, leads a class at Assisi Special School.

A Place of Growth and Hope

Assisi Special School celebrates 15 years of specialized care

Assisi Special School was founded by the sisters of our Assisi Province (South India) to meet the needs of families in the Bangalore area for a school to educate children with special needs. Beginning with a dozen students, the sisters provided daily support for the children's safety, education, and enrichment.

The initial results were so encouraging to the children, their families, and the sisters that the school continued to expand. In October 2018, a new building with upgraded facilities opened to help meet the needs of nearly 150 students with special needs. That number has continued to grow as Assisi Special School approaches its 15th anniversary.

In the spirit of our foundresses, we look forward to helping our students grow physically, intellectually, and spiritually.

"The teacher-student ratio of 1:7 includes both boys and girls who range in age from three years to 18 years," explained Sister Kripa Maria Jerass, the school's ministry coordinator. The school's greatest need is for salaries that will attract and retain the teachers, therapists, nurses, doctors, and office staff with the training and expertise to help students with disabilities to reach their full potential.

"Some of the students may be autistic, and may tune out instructions," Sister Kripa Maria said. "Some have a very short attention span and are unable to concentrate on classroom activities, and one student with Down syndrome is very short-tempered. Other students may exhibit



Solomon makes candles as part of his vocational training.

hyperactive or aggressive behavior.” New therapy rooms will help the sisters to address these behaviors and provide the best possible learning environment for students.

Students who complete their secondary level of training enter the school’s vocational training program. The sisters recently sought funding for equipment to allow vocational students to learn to make envelopes.

“We selected envelope-making as the best vocational unit for our school,” Sister Kripa Maria said. “Supplies are readily available in our locality, making it the most economical choice.” Other students learn crafts such as candle and lamp making, which can also be profitable skills.

“In the spirit of our foundresses, we look forward to helping our students grow physically, intellectually, and spiritually,” Sister Kripa Maria said. “We are most grateful to all our generous donors who make this ministry possible.”



Sister Kripa Maria leads a class at Assisi Special School.



Student Shashank paints a clay lamp in vocational training, supervised by Mrs. Deepa.



Sister Wimi Wilson Thermadam with students and teachers selling clay lamps.

Dedication Shapes the Mission

Committed to the sisters' ministries, advisory committee members cherish their service

Since 2016, a dedicated group of donors and supporters of the congregation have joined with sisters and staff to form an advisory committee for our International Office of Mission Advancement. Their brainstorming, visioning, and guidance have helped the office to broaden its base of support while enhancing existing donor relationships.

Several of the committee's lay members recently shared why they have chosen to dedicate their time to serving the community in this way. For Pat Wilde, her commitment is an extension of a bond she has had with our community for seven decades.

"I had never heard of the School Sisters of St. Francis until 1953, when a friend recommended them to me," Pat recalled. "I was immediately drawn to their friendliness and spirit of joy. When I found out they worked with the poor, that clinched it for me. I joined them for the next 17 years.

"In 1970, God called me elsewhere, but I have always remained close to the sisters through the years. I am a Franciscan at heart, and always will be," Pat said. "When I was asked to be on the Mission Advancement Advisory Committee, I could not say no." She said she feels a particular affinity for the sisters' work "helping those in greatest need, such as in India and on our southwest border through Casa Alexia."

David Hodge was introduced to the community through Sister Sylvia Leonardi, who taught his daughter Emelia in third grade at St. Joseph Catholic Academy in Kenosha, Wisconsin. Decades earlier, Sister Sylvia had also been the third-grade teacher of David's wife, Maggie. David is drawn to the sisters' work among those most in need.

"I was looking for a way to give back to the sisters, and support their work around the world."

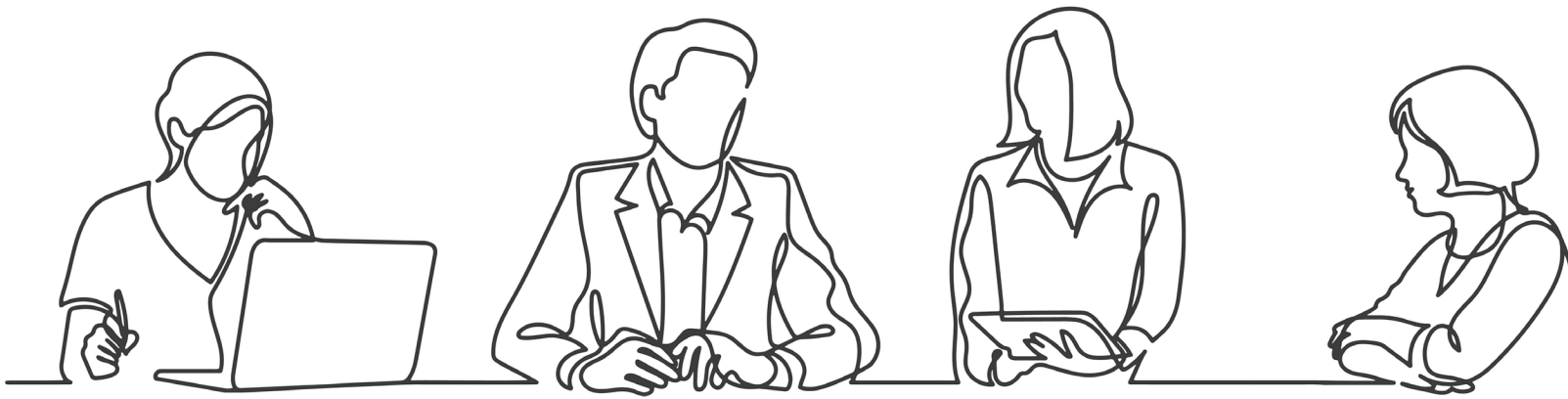
~ DAVID HODGE

"I am continually inspired by how the sisters work in the neediest places in the world, and continue to be vibrant, alive, and growing," he said. He chooses to serve on the committee because "I was looking for a way to give back to the sisters, and support their work around the world."

Grateful Beyond Words

Associate Barbara Kluka also traces her connection with our community to her Kenosha school days. "I met the sisters in September 1958 when I began my freshman year at St. Joseph High School," she recalled. "From that first day of high school, and then throughout my Alverno College experience, I always was aware of the dedication, wisdom, and teaching skills of the sisters. They mentored, challenged and cheered on each student. To this day, I am grateful beyond words."

Barbara said she accepted the invitation to serve on the Mission Advancement Advisory Committee because "I think it's important



"I love that the sisters go where they see the need and make things work."

~ MARY PAT CLASEN

to have a variety of views, suggestions, and feedback from a group that includes both sisters and committed lay persons. The care of retired sisters is a priority for me. In a wide variety of ministries, the sisters literally gave their lives for those they served.

"As a member of the advisory committee, I hope to express my gratitude and commitment to support those who gave so much to so many," Barbara continued. "I am also impressed by the dedication and commitment of the other persons on the committee, and the staff is amazing in their creativity and perseverance."

Wendy Ackley was introduced to our community by her friend and fellow Realtor, Judy Koob. "Judy introduced me to Sister Barbaralie Stieffermann, who was writing a book at the time. We took a tour of St. Joseph Chapel and talked over lunch about what the School Sisters of St. Francis' mission is."

That conversation inspired a trip to Campbellsport, Wisconsin, to see St. Joseph Convent. "I have such an interest in architecture and the preservation of historical buildings," Wendy said. "About a year later, Pam asked me to breakfast and she piqued my interest with the sisters' mission to help people with special needs in India, and their determination to stop human trafficking in Milwaukee."

Mary Pat Clasen's connection with our community began when she was working with the Milwaukee archdiocese's office for Latin America.

"Sister Fran Cunningham told me about the sisters' work in Guatemala, so on a visit to see friends, I stopped at the children's home in Santa Apolonia. After my visit, I began to put together a cultural exchange with U.S. students and kids from the home." Mary Pat remained connected to the children's home for more than 15 years.

"I serve on the advisory group to keep informed about the work of the sisters," Mary Pat said. "I love that they go where they see the need and make things work. They show a remarkable resilience in adapting to the realities of their community and their environments. I applaud the sisters' work, and the work of those who support them."

Pat echoed Mary Pat's admiration, saying, "The sisters directly interact with the poor and needy. We may not be there to act, but our funds for the sisters' ministries empower the sisters to help the poor for us."



To learn ways you can support the work of the Mission Advancement Office, please contact Director Pam Mueller at 414-385-5338.



Climb Every Mountain

Our sisters are attracting many new vocations in India's farthest reaches

Sister Santibell M. Marak (front) and Amritha Charuparambil (back) accompany a group of girls

The School Sisters of St. Francis have always been mission-focused. We witness to the gospel and we encounter people as their lives and needs are made present. The spirit, life, and charism of our congregation direct our ministry and mission.

When the sisters of our St. Francis Province observed a decade ago that a number of young women in northeastern India were attracted to religious life, they incorporated vocation promotion into their mission work in this remote region.

Our sisters expanded their ministry presence to the Loyola College campus in Williamnager and St. Francis Convent in Kharkutta. Most recently, the sisters have extended their efforts with a third mission in the state of Assam, in the Himalayan mountains. St. Joseph Convent in Azara serves as the central location for training women in formation and is a hub for sisters traveling to and from the region's missions.

Many of the people in this part of India live in tribal groups in remote villages that are

accessible only by ancient walking trails. The isolation of the families has been the greatest challenge for the sisters as they try to connect with young women interested in the Catholic faith.

"There are no direct transportation routes to any of the places we visit, so we have had to depend on taxis, auto rickshaws, or motor bikes," said Sister Elsa Paul Chiriyankandath. Sister Elsa Paul, who served two terms as vice president of our international congregation, now serves as ministry coordinator for the northeast mission in Assam.

"Our trips sometimes take as long as 10 to 12 hours, and most of the time we have to travel without any food," Sister Elsa Paul said. "Then, when we reach our destination, we have to climb mountains and steep hills to reach the people!"

Being this isolated presents many challenges to the sisters and the people with whom they minister.

“There aren’t any good hospital facilities in our villages, and no vehicles to take our sisters to hospitals,” Sister Elsa Paul said. “One of our sisters had a fall and had multiple fractures in her left hand. It took her more than seven hours to reach a hospital taking public transportation.”

Just west of this region, another group of sisters has been ministering under similar circumstances in the states of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Orissa, and West Bengal.

“Nearly two-fifths of the population consists of various indigenous peoples, and only one in four are Christian,” said Sister Reena Kannanaikal, ministry coordinator. “Identifying a genuine vocation among the small minority of Christians in this part of India constitutes a great responsibility. In spite of this challenge, we have been blessed with a good number of vocations from these states. We are hoping for 20 new vocations in the year 2023.”

Like Sister Elsa Paul, Sister Reena sees travel as one of the greatest challenges the sisters face as they work with young women from this remote, mountainous region.

“Traveling through the forest areas of this region is especially risky,” Sister Reena said. “In addition to the expense of relying on hired vehicles, traveling this way or on public transportation is not reliable due to bad weather conditions and frequent attacks from hostile tribes.”

Sister Reena said that although the region’s road network is continuously being improved, all-weather roads still reach fewer than half of the villages. “This makes it very difficult for the sisters to visit the families of aspiring candidates often enough to create a rapport with the family members,” she said. “In addition, the climate during our vocation promotion season from March to June is extremely hot, so we have to be careful to avoid fever and sun stroke.”

Tremendous Benefits

The sisters make visits to parishes and schools three times a year. This has required spending days and nights in railway stations and at bus stands.

“Our work as vocation promoters is challenging, but it is also very rewarding,” Sister Elsa Paul said. “Before we visit, we contact the principals of different schools asking them for permission to meet with their Catholic students. We then tell these students about the mission of our congregation and our various ministries. If we get a positive response from any of them, we go to the parish priest and get permission to meet with the families.”



Villagers accompany Sister Namita as she prepares to travel.

“Traveling through the forest areas of this region is especially risky. In addition to the expense of relying on hired vehicles, traveling this way or on public transportation is not reliable due to bad weather conditions and frequent attacks from hostile tribes.”



From left, Sister Keerti Bara, Sister Divya Warkade, candidate's mother, candidate Anjaly Ekka, and her siblings.

Sisters visit the homes of prospective candidates to find out if both parents are Catholic; if they are not, the sisters will not recruit that girl. Home visits also provide a glimpse into the family's prayer life.

"Our work as vocation promoters is challenging, but it is also very rewarding."

"Parents are mainly interested in where the young women go for their training, and how many years of preparation are required before taking their first vows," Sister Elsa Paul said. "The most encouraging part of these visits is the girls' interest in our ministries. They are deeply impressed to learn about our care for destitute men and women and physically disabled children. They are also interested in our concern for students who drop out of school; our health and hygiene awareness programs; and our emphasis on moral values in family life."

The sisters are hopeful that two new vehicles, recently purchased thanks to generous support

from our donors, will make it possible to travel more safely and quickly throughout northeast India – a great benefit to the sisters and all those with whom they minister.

"Our goal in Assam is to visit even more parishes and schools in 2023," Sister Elsa Paul said hopefully. "We hope to receive at least 15 new candidates this year."

Thank you for the prayers and financial support that are making it possible for our congregation to make disciples and spread the gospel to earth's remotest ends!



Erina Tirkey is brought by Sisters Rajni and Namita from Kusmi, Chattisgarh

Community Celebrates Chapel Garden's Completion

Renovation project yields beautifully appointed apartments and townhomes

More than 130 sisters, partners, and friends of the community gathered in St. Joseph Hall on December 12 for a blessing celebration of Chapel Garden Apartments and Townhomes. It was the culmination of a renovation project that the School Sisters of St. Francis announced in 2019 to transform underutilized space at St. Joseph Center and the St. Jude building into affordable housing units.

The Most Rev. James T. Schuerman, Auxiliary Bishop of Milwaukee, blessed the project and offered his congratulations to the community for transforming St. Joseph Center through this renovation project. The festive afternoon also included remarks from our congregation's President, Sister Deb Fumagalli, and housing ministry director Sister Joann Riesterer; a scripture reading by Vice President Sister Tresa Abraham Kizhakeparambil; songs led by the Music Ministry Team; and intercessory prayers from the U.S. Province Leadership Team.

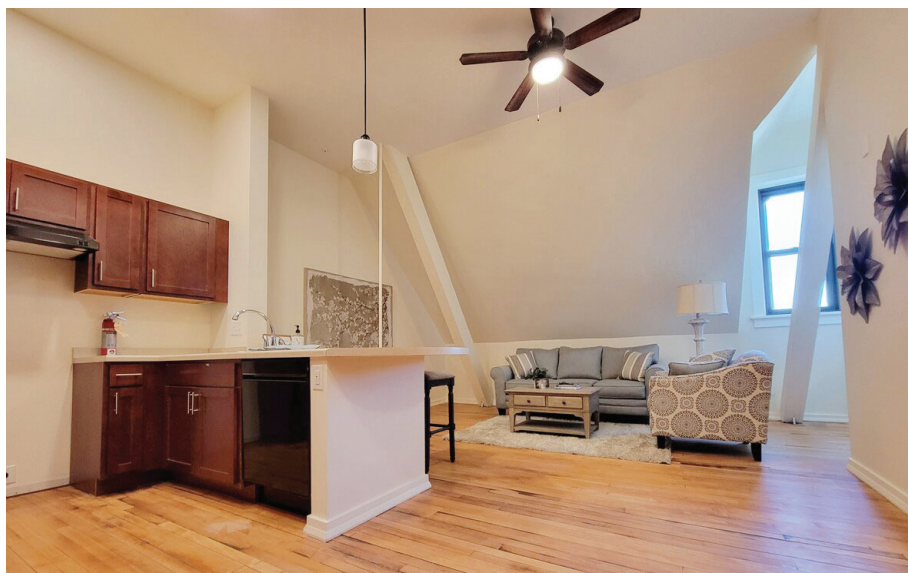
Numerous representatives from city, county, and state government were joined by civic groups and leaders from the community's financial and construction partners. The event concluded with the sisters singing the Blessing of St. Francis for all those who have been instrumental in the project, which includes apartments for seniors and townhomes for families.

"The love, respect, and care that your congregation has for your hometown is very clear in your decision to transform part of St.

Joseph Center into affordable housing," Bishop Schuerman said. "You showed great foresight in taking this step when you did. You all can be very proud that the new Chapel Garden Apartments and Townhomes will carry on the legacy of St. Joseph Center. It will continue to be a special place where your congregation's commitment to hospitality comes alive."

The Chapel Garden dedication was recorded and is available for viewing on our sisters' YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/@sssfmke.

We thank the many people who dedicated so much time, effort, creativity, and prayer to ensuring the success of the Chapel Garden initiative. To learn about rental units that are available at Chapel Garden Apartments, please email chapelgarden@oakbrookcorp.com.



Beautiful Chapel Garden model apartment

An Oasis of Healing

Guatemalan sisters offer natural remedies and renewed hope

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on every aspect of our lives, and this is true wherever our sisters minister. At the Franciscan Oasis Rieti Spirituality and Healing Center, the coronavirus disrupted our sisters' usual method of providing natural remedies and psychological, physical, and spiritual healing to people in need in San Marcos, Guatemala.

“During the pandemic, we had little interaction with patients to comply with the physical distancing protocols,” wrote Sister Inés Albizures, who oversees the center. “The way we were able to help was through telephone consultations. We then either sent the treatments to them or they came to pick them up.”

Although patients gratefully called with the good news that the treatments helped them, they also said they missed the personal interaction with Sisters Inés, Josefa, Bersabé, and Petronila.

“The natural and welcoming environment that people experience at Franciscan Oasis Rieti is what gives life and helps the health of our patients,” Sister Inés said. “People need us. They believe in our work, and they asked that we go back to giving in-person care.”

The ongoing economic impact of the pandemic meant that the need for the sisters' services and treatments was greater than ever. Thanks to generous funding from our donors, the sisters at Franciscan Oasis Rieti were able to safely re-open in-person activities and services for their clients, including low-cost and no-cost treatments

for people without the ability to pay. The maintenance of the center's garden and greenhouse enables the sisters to economically grow many medicinal plants used in their treatments.

The sisters do not need to advertise their services: The center thrives through word-of-mouth recommendations from patients. They come from the local San Marcos area as

well from throughout Guatemala and even the Mexican border region.

“Some of the women, men, and children we serve were told that they are terminal patients, and that they would no longer benefit from chemical medicine treatments,” Sister Inés said. “They come to Rieti as their last hope. We can confirm that with our care, many of them have managed to heal themselves. We try to be well prepared to give quality service, and to serve with love and joy.”



The courtyard of Franciscan Oasis Rieti Spirituality and Healing Center.

Deepening Our Relationships

Associates explore new ways to connect

BY CATHERINE ALEXANDER

Associate Relationship is a specific way for people to identify with the charism, values, and mission of the School Sisters of St. Francis. Associates are women and men who are drawn to the charism of the sisters and want to belong to something larger than themselves.

Since the onset of the pandemic, we have been finding new ways to stay connected with one another. First, we have our “virtual living room” drop-ins via Zoom videoconferencing. For the past year, sisters and associates have been coming together monthly to get to know each other and deepen our relationships.

Then, beginning last October, the Associate Relationship team of Rosaura Solano, Sister Therese Thoenen, and I has been meeting with prospective associates and their contact persons monthly for an informative gathering. Our goals with these meetings are three-fold:

- Explore the meaning of Associate Relationship;
- Understand who the associates of the School Sisters of St. Francis are; and
- Appreciate the spirit of collaboration and mutuality through the gifts that associates and sisters bring to the relationship.

We are thrilled with the outpouring of joy and camaraderie that have occurred from the very first meeting; that spirit is still going strong. Associates are a group that is happy to be together – to get to know one another and to learn in a group setting.



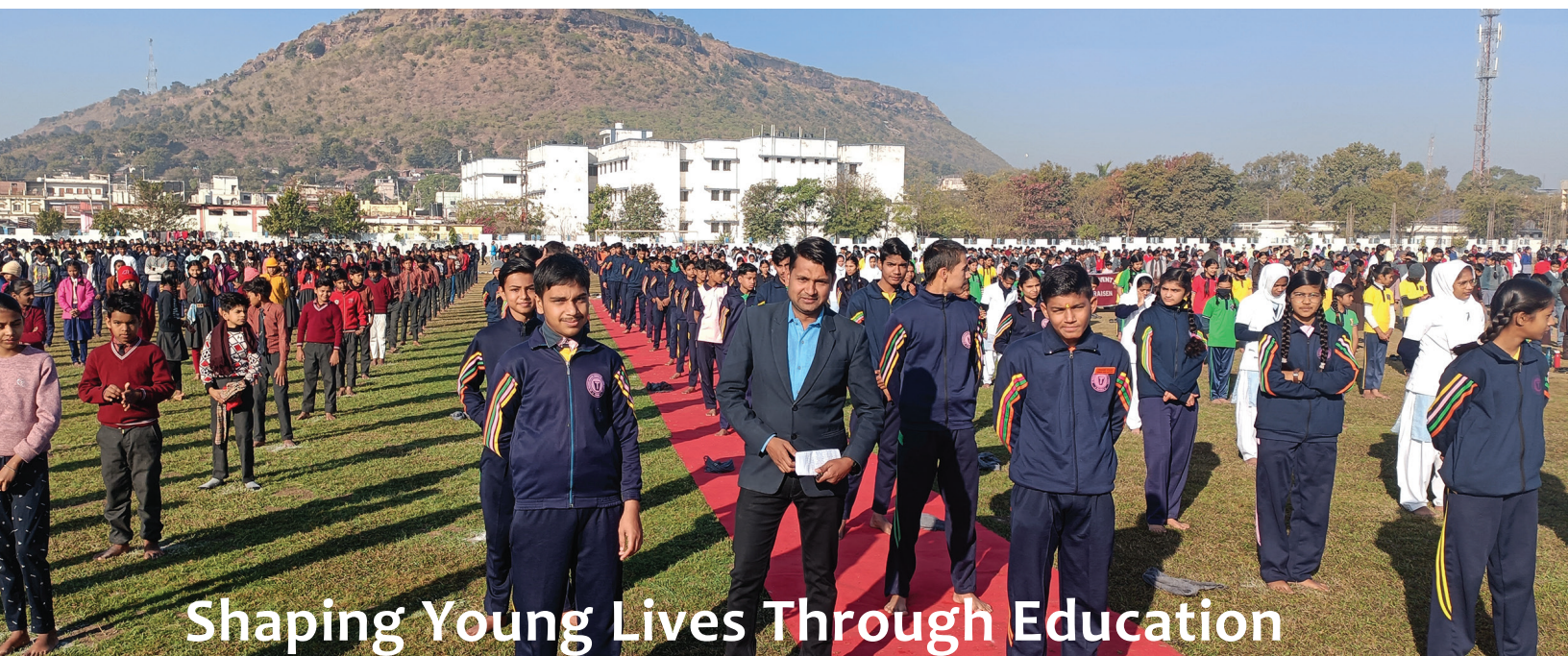
The Associate Relationship team of Sister Therese Thoenen, Catherine Alexander and Rosaura Solano.

Our gatherings cover a full range of topics from the Associate Relationship Contact Handbook. The first sessions have focused on “Getting to Know You” – which was not difficult! – and “The Call to be an Associate.” A more recent session focused on the history of the congregation, with a special focus on Mother Alfons Schmid, a foundress of the community; and Mother Stanislaus Hegner, who served as Superior General of the congregation from 1930 to 1942. Sister Barbaralie Stieffermann’s lively presentation added a personal and meaningful touch to our required reading list for prospective associates.

This group will continue to meet monthly until our next acceptance and renewal ceremony in September. We feel confident that our connection to each other will continue to grow.

If you are interested in learning more about Associate Relationship with our community, please visit the Associate Relationship page of our community’s website for details and contact information:
www.sssf.org.





Shaping Young Lives Through Education

St. Francis Higher Secondary School in Raisen, India, is dealing with an enrollment challenge. Catholic education is extremely popular in this city of 59,000, and the sisters and 130 faculty and staff at St. Francis School now educate more than 3,000 students ages 6 to 17 on their 10-acre campus. The school has been adding new classrooms to keep up with the demand, but has struggled to keep pace.

“Furnishing our classrooms with desks and benches has become the most urgent requirement to further our institution,” wrote Sister Anjaly Nirappell, the ministry coordinator at St. Francis School. “Many parents want to enroll their children in our school, but due to a lack

of benches and desks, we have been unable to admit new students. During the pandemic, many students were not able to pay their school fees, so the administration couldn’t afford the investment in additional benches and desks.”

The generosity of our donors will make it possible for our sisters to continue offering more children excellent academic and spiritual preparation. “At St. Francis School, we aim to bring out the best from our students with the cooperation of teachers and parents,” Sister Anjaly said. “We empower our students to face life’s challenges with an optimistic attitude, serenity, courage, and trust in God.”