

Alive

WITH THE CALL OF THE GOSPEL

Celebrating 150
Years of Ministry

2023–2024
Gratitude Report

St. Joseph Chapel
Restoration



Sisters and associates joined with students and faculty of Nativity Jesuit Academy to commemorate the United Nations' International Day of Peace in September.

PHOTO: NAHOMI MORALES

Peace

‘Lord, we ask that you come to us and fill us with your peace just as you came to your frightened and fearful followers after your resurrection.

‘You blessed them with your peace, peace that the world cannot give. Filled with that peace, your followers went forth, spirit-filled with courage, trust, zeal, and hope. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, they went out to all parts of the Earth spreading the Good News!

‘We, too – School Sisters of St. Francis, associates, the many followers of Jesus – are blessed by the peace of Jesus and are commissioned to be the face of the Gospel. Following the example of Jesus’ first followers, and blessed with the peace of our Lord, we must spill that peace on all God’s creation: the sun, the moon, the winds, the water, and all God’s peoples!

‘Peace will be our food for our journey. We will journey to all creation, bringing about the Kingdom of God.

– Sister Thoma Miller
(1927–2020)

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FRONT COVER
St. Joseph Chapel, the 107-year-old landmark
inside the School Sisters of St. Francis'
Milwaukee motherhouse, is undergoing a
major architectural and artistic restoration
this year. Turn to page 4 of this issue to learn
more about the process of preserving the
safety, integrity, and beauty of this historic
worship space, and see behind-the-scenes
images of the restoration work.

COVER: SISTER THUY TRAN, LHC

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From Our Leadership

St. Francis of Assisi, our patron, experienced God as the source of all good, the God of unconditional love. Creative, abundant, and enduring nonviolence offer other ways of describing this unconditional love.

We live in a world of great external violence that is physical, emotional, psychological, institutional, and structural, as well as within our own beings. Franciscan tradition offers us ways to reflect on the God of nonviolent love and how this nonviolent God is calling us to cultivate the spirituality and practice of active nonviolence in our lives and with others.

Our challenge today is to cultivate a path, as individuals and as communities throughout the world, that actively proclaims the good news of Jesus Christ. In this way, we might challenge the patterns of violence and open ourselves to the transforming grace of the nonviolent God.

And so, what is ours to do? Open safe spaces for active listening. Change the dynamics of violence by creating just and compassionate solutions. Through our daily nonviolent choices and actions, the noble and courageous spirit within each of us expresses itself in the skills, wisdom, and character of a nonviolent human being. This is how each of us, in our own way, can move the world in the direction of peace.

How can we be less violent and more compassionate with ourselves and with others? It is not an easy journey, yet God promises us grace, and never abandons us.

As Franciscans, let us travel the path through a love that is not self-centered but rather goes out of the self for the sake of others. Let us embrace Francis' invitation to be an instrument of peace in this broken world.



IMMORTAL, INVISIBLE

St. Francis died almost
eight hundred years ago
the homilist said.
St. Francis dead? No!

He lives in caring hands
and quieting eye
in singing stream
flaming leaf
and flowering sky.

The death that
separates him from us
is so thin!
He moves among us
freely here
unlimited by skin.

— Sister Irene Zimmerman, SSSF



Restoring a Sacred Treasure

Preserving the safety, integrity, and beauty of St. Joseph Chapel

After extensive consultation with experts in the field of church architecture, art, and historic preservation, the International Leadership Team and Office of Mission Advancement announced plans this spring to undertake an extensive restoration of St. Joseph Chapel in Milwaukee.

Repair and restoration of the chapel's plaster, marble, mosaics, and windows began in mid-June, following our community's celebration of the sisters' Jubilee anniversaries. Masses and other services have been celebrated in St. Joseph Hall while the work is being performed.

"Our team conferred with numerous architects, engineers, and craftspeople, and it was clear to us that we could not defer maintenance on the chapel," said Sister Deborah Fumagalli, President of our congregation. "St. Joseph Chapel is a

sacred treasure, and we must be responsible stewards in preserving and enhancing its safety, integrity, and beauty. Taking these restoration and preservation steps now will help to ensure that it remains a beloved worship space for generations to come."

A team of expert artisans from the nationally acclaimed Daprato Rigali Studios in Chicago was chosen to perform the restoration, with the goal of completing the work in nine to 12 months. The project has included plastering, painting, tile repair and cleaning to address issues that are crucial to maintaining the historic, 107-year-old chapel.

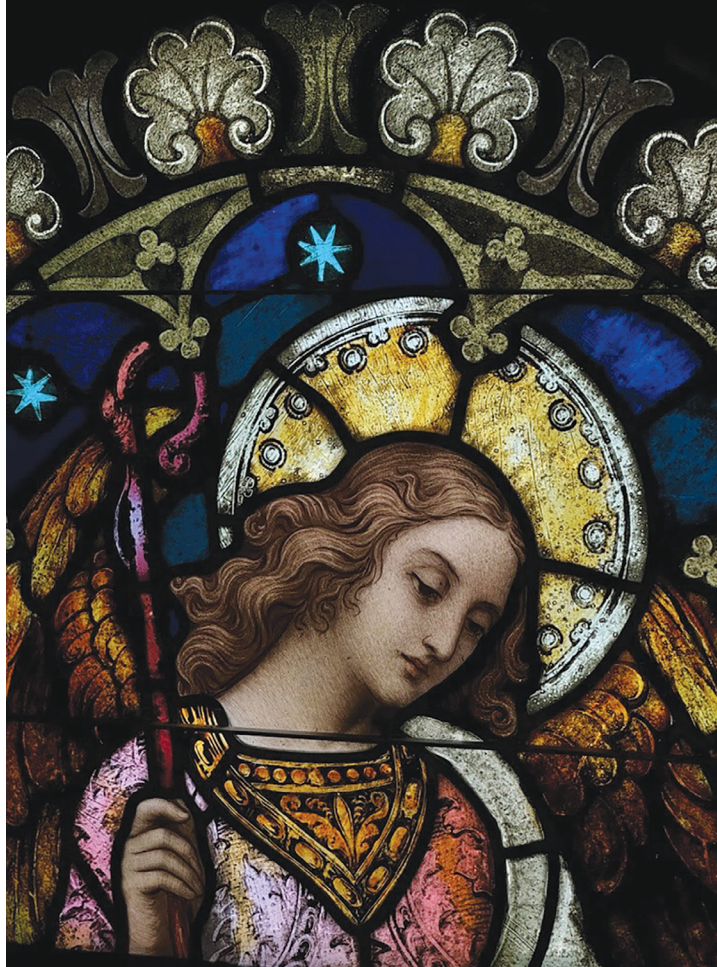
"We receive a weekly update from Ellie Galvin, project manager, where she shares photos of the completed work and artistic discoveries from that

week,” Sister Deborah shared. “The restoration work has gone very smoothly and efficiently, and on schedule.”

The Daprato Rigali team has a history of excellence in the field of church statuary, decoration, and restoration that goes back to 1860. “My great, great-grandfather started the business, which means I am fifth generation,” Ellie said. “Our goal is to help highlight the beauty in a space for all to enjoy for many years to come. We are fortunate to work with extremely skilled and consistent craftsmen to help us with this mission.”

Ellie said the work has been progressing well, without any major obstacles or surprises. “There have been a few areas where there was water damage, but we have been able to patch and repair those areas and then prime and paint,” she said.

Reaching the towering heights of the chapel’s ceiling is a feat of engineering requiring hundreds of pieces of scaffolding. “That has been one of the most difficult aspects of the restoration process,” Ellie said. “The restoration of the mosaics has been a challenge as well. It is an intricate process to clean each of the individual tiles while making sure the structure is still sound.”





Breathtaking, Treasured, Sacred Place

Ellie noted that because of the chapel's enormous size, many areas have not been cleaned or touched up over the course of many years. "The 'before and after' is so dramatic," she said. "It really gives great satisfaction to our crew to make that big of a difference. We feel so honored and blessed that we were chosen to work in this amazing space, and we are so excited to see the end result!"

Sister Deborah echoed that excitement, noting, "Most surprising to me has been the magnificent color of the mosaics. The work has revealed much more luster from many previously unseen colors. The piece behind the altar in the Adoration Chapel reveals angels and clouds that radiate a blue chroma."

"The vision of our foundresses, especially Mother Alfons Schmid, continues to make us aware of the limitless beauty of music and art in this sacred place." Sister Deborah continued. "We are ever grateful for the generous spirit and support of our benefactors and donors, with whom this spectacular restoration is made possible. I am delighted that these precious artistic pieces will be enjoyed by worshipers and performers as they were intended by the artisans over 100 years ago."



If you would like to support this restoration of the sisters' sacred treasure, we invite you to donate on our website, www.sssf.org, or contact our Mission Advancement Office at 414-384-3334.

A Loving, Lifelong Bond

Denise Ryan's community connection goes back to childhood

For Denise Ryan, a lifetime as a caring professional has been filled with serendipity. By accepting some surprising twists and turns, and following guidance from the Holy Spirit, Denise finds herself today in Associate Relationship with a religious community she knew intimately as a child, and caring for sisters who were friends of her beloved aunt.

Denise's current vocation is caring for retired sisters who can benefit from memory care at Our Lady of the Angels (OLA), a convent in Greenfield, Wisconsin, that is co-sponsored by our congregation and the School Sisters of Notre Dame. It is a career path that she had not envisioned for herself when she enrolled at Mount Mary University.

Denise was interested in the creative field, and chose Mount Mary to study art. She explored fashion and interior design, and was taught by a School Sister of Notre Dame who, decades later, Denise would meet again at OLA. As much as she loved being creative, Denise found that the Holy Spirit had another plan for her when she attended a seminar about possible college minors.

"I swear to this day that the pamphlet on gerontology just jumped into my hands," Denise recalled. She was instantly drawn to the study of aging, and it proved to be a nudge closer to where she felt she was meant to be. That moment was a catalyst for her career in social work.

Denise encountered a newspaper ad calling for a social worker at a 400-bed nursing home. Despite not yet having completed her degree, she was enthusiastic about caring for older adults. She was hired and assigned to a floor with 70 patients



Denise visiting with her aunt, Sister Joan Tabat, at Madonna High School at Easter when she was 2 (left) and again at age 8.

with Alzheimer's disease and related conditions. "It was baptism by fire," Denise admitted, "but I enjoyed every minute of it."

Inspired by an "exuberant spirit"

Denise has had a lifelong connection to the School Sisters of St. Francis. Sister Joan Tabat, her aunt, was received into the community in 1938 and played an integral part in Denise's life. According to Denise, Sister Joan was a musician, a bit of a rebel, and most importantly an "exuberant spirit." She was such an inspiration to Denise that she considers Sister Joan, now in heaven, to be her spiritual "contact person" in her Associate Relationship.

Denise considers her discovery of Associate Relationship to be yet another sign from the Holy Spirit. While participating in an outreach event at St. Joseph Center, Denise was picking up another event flyer when she also grabbed a brochure describing Associate Relationship. She became intrigued and reached out to Sister Rosemary Reier, who led her through the process and acted as another mentor for her. The fact that she had grown up around the School Sisters of St. Francis as a little girl and then found the community again later in life was a sign to Denise that this relationship was the result of the Holy Spirit's guidance, and that she had ended up where she was meant to be.

Denise said Associate Relationship has encouraged her in her vocation to help others and has strengthened her personal faith. She meets monthly with a group of other associates to socialize, share stories, and for mutual support. She attends events at the motherhouse and Sacred Heart that have helped connect her to the whole community.

"Being an associate has provided me with additional spiritual support for living out my Catholic faith," Denise said. "The peace and



Denise visits with Sister Grace Golata at a social gathering at Our Lady of the Angels.

"Being an associate has provided me with additional spiritual support for living out my Catholic faith."

love of the community has given me courage to be a positive voice and to celebrate St. Francis' simplicity of life."

Associate Relationship inspired Denise to volunteer at OLA, which led to her role as community coordinator at the convent in November 2022. Her gerontology experience equipped her well to perform the many tasks that help make the retired sisters' lives happy.

"A lot of my work involves just listening and being present," she said. "The sisters who live at OLA are called to ministry through their prayer and presence. There is beauty in simply being. That's exactly how I feel: I'm supposed to be here in prayer with them and in presence for them."

Her duties also include shopping, managing finances, distributing gifts, encouraging the residents, and setting up rooms. Denise is ready to lend a hand whenever the sisters are in need.

"Being with a sister when she nears the end of her earthly life has been an enriching piece for me," Denise said. "To accompany a sister, her family, and friends through her funeral is truly touching, especially seeing how the sisters care for each other. It's beautiful."

Visit our website to learn about Associate Relationship with our sisters: www.sssf.org.

Hostels Make Promising Futures Possible

Sisters' are giving girls access to life-changing opportunities

In India, hostels run by the School Sisters of St. Francis play an irreplaceable role in the education and development of young girls. Hostels provide a home away from home for students and give them access to an education they would otherwise not be able to reach.

This is especially true for students living at Assisi Nilaya, a hostel that provides 40 girls with hearing impairment between the ages of 3 and 17 years with housing and access to education at a school in Mysore; and at Maria Sadan Hostel, where 54 tribal girls whose homes are many miles from Bichhiya are able to live while they attend kindergarten to tenth grade.

Comprehensive Support

In addition to supporting the girls' studies with supervised study and social time, the sisters at Assisi Nilaya provide the girls' meals, allow time and offer guidance for wellness activities like meditation and yoga, and support the girls' spiritual development with private and group prayer.

An average day at Assisi Nilaya is a busy one. The four sisters who manage the education and care of the girls run a robust daily schedule beginning with morning routines that start at 5:00 a.m. and winding down with social time that includes watching sign-language-assisted or subtitled movies, reading books, and following the news until 10:00 p.m.

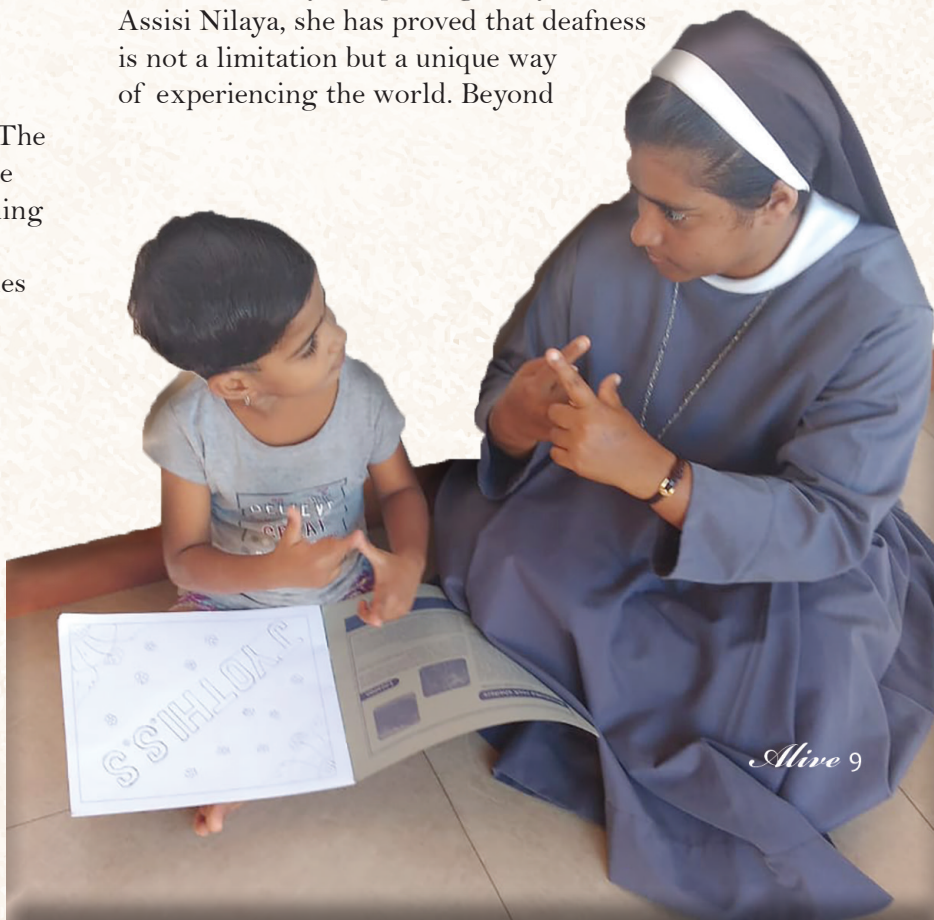
For students living at the hostel, the sisters' ministry changes their lives and offers them hope for a bright future. One fifth-grade student, Chaithanya, was born into a busy household in Mysore. Her parents, both hearing, discovered her deafness early on. Tragically, her father died by suicide, but her

mother embraced her daughter's unique way of experiencing the world. Despite the poverty and illiteracy in her family, Chaithanya's mother could see a promising future for her daughter at Assisi Nilaya. Though initially shy, Chaithanya has made new friends, found a sense of belonging, and now expresses herself fluidly through sign language.

Like Chaithanya, Pregna is a student who has found acceptance at Assisi Nilaya. Pregna is a very dynamic and energetic eighth-grade student who has been deaf and unable to speak since birth. When her father learned of her condition, he abandoned his wife and child. Pregna's mother was frustrated by the communication barrier and brought her to Assisi Nilaya so she could learn sign language.

Pregna's social approach has been one of quiet observation. She watches the world through a keen lens, her eyes capturing every detail. At Assisi Nilaya, she has proved that deafness is not a limitation but a unique way of experiencing the world. Beyond

Sisters at Assisi Nilaya hostel assist girls with hearing impairments.



the classroom, she uses her talents to foster understanding and be a bridge between deaf students and peers who can hear.

The success that Chaithanya, Pregna, and many other girls have experienced at Assisi Nilaya would not be possible without the energy that powers all of the hostel's essential daily activities.

The unreliability of India's power grid left the sisters and their students in difficult circumstances. The hostel is in a remote area where blackouts and power cuts are frequent, which is particularly challenging for the girls who rely heavily on their vision for their studies and to socialize with one another. Education is their bridge to a successful future and without the ability to study, that future is at risk.

To alleviate these worries, the sisters at Assisi Nilaya were able to have solar panels installed at the hostel. Thanks to the generosity of donors, the hostel now has a power source independent from the regional power grid. The hostel's electricity supply now is more stable and the girls can study without fear of power failures – especially during exam time!

The solar grid has also dramatically reduced the hostel's electricity expenses, enabling the sisters to focus more of their financial resources on the care of the girls. Solar power is a clean, renewable energy source that helps to reduce the hostel's carbon footprint. It also raises the students' awareness of living in an ecologically friendly way that honors the Franciscan charism.

Encouraging Growth and Success

At Maria Sadan hostel in Bichhiya, three sisters, four lay supporting staff, and a driver provide care for more than 50 girls. These girls come from home villages that are much too far from the school for the girls to commute on a daily basis.

“A tribal girl's day is shaped by natural rhythms and community needs, with less rigid scheduling,”

said Sister Jancy Kozhaliparamban. “Hostels offer a structured routine with set times for meals, activities, and rest. We provide formal education and structured extracurricular activities in a controlled environment with amenities and communal living spaces. The hostel also facilitates interaction with a diverse group of peers from different backgrounds.”

At Maria Sadan, the girls wake up at 6:00 a.m. and start their day with a half hour of yoga, followed by study time, a bath, breakfast, and group prayer before they leave for school at 8:45. At noon, the girls return to the hostel for a half-hour lunch break, then resume classes until the school day ends at 3:15. After school, the girls play games, relax, take another bath, and wash clothes before working on homework and studies, with the sisters available for mentoring. At 7:15 the girls eat dinner together in the common dining room, then watch TV, relax, and complete homework before bedtime at 9:30.

Sister Jancy said the sisters put a special emphasis on helping the girls make informed choices about their health.

“We provide regular workshops and seminars on key health topics such as nutrition, hygiene, menstrual health, and mental wellness,” she said. “We also offer regular health check-ups and access to healthcare services, ensuring that any health issues are promptly addressed.

“Our nutrition programs teach the girls about balanced diets and the importance of nutritious food, contributing to their overall health and development. We also provide access to counseling and mental health support, helping the girls manage stress, anxiety, and other emotional challenges. Our training on healthy living practices, including exercise routines, stress management, and avoiding harmful substances, equips the girls with skills for a healthier lifestyle. The emphasis on health and wellness addresses immediate health needs



“We provide formal education and structured extracurricular activities in a controlled environment with amenities and communal living spaces.”

and enhances the girls’ overall quality of life and future opportunities, contributing to their personal and academic success.”

One girl who is thriving with the sisters’ help is Bhumica, a young girl from the remote village of Surajpura. She came to Maria Sadan last year with dreams of academic success and personal growth.

Coming from a small village 28 miles away, Bhumica faced an array of challenges in the bustling hostel environment. Initially, she was very shy, withdrawn, and found it difficult to engage in activities, which led to a sense of disappointment and isolation. Recognizing her potential and the barriers she was facing, the sisters at Maria Sadan developed a comprehensive support plan.

“Through personalized counseling, encouragement, and academic assistance, Bhumica gradually began to excel,” Sister Jancy said. “The staff’s consistent support helped her build confidence and develop a sense of belonging. They encouraged her to participate in activities and provided a nurturing environment where she could thrive.”

Today, Bhumica is an outstanding student who has blossomed into a confident, engaged individual. Her journey from a shy newcomer to a thriving, active participant is a testament to the transformative impact of the supportive environment at Maria Sadan. Her success story highlights her personal growth and also serves as an inspiration to other girls in the hostel.

Like Assisi Nilaya hostel, Maria Sadan hostel offers a caring, structured environment that significantly contributes to the success of its students. The sisters at both hostels provide a safe, supportive, and nurturing atmosphere where the girls feel cared for and valued, fostering strong relationships and emotional stability.

The success of Chaithanya, Pregna, Bhumica, and many other girls at Assisi Nilaya and Maria Sadan demonstrates the profound impact of the dedication and determination of our sisters who minister at these missions. Thanks to the prayers and generous financial support from our congregation’s donors, both facilities are enhancing the lives of these young women and, as a result, contributing to positive change in their home communities and beyond.

A Joyous Celebration of 150 Years

Sisters from around the world gathered for the anniversary Eucharist

On Sunday, April 28, the School Sisters of St. Francis marked the 150th anniversary of the founding of their congregation with a Eucharistic Liturgy in their historic St. Joseph Chapel at their Milwaukee motherhouse. Milwaukee Archbishop Jerome Listecki presided at the Eucharist and preached the homily.

The congregation was founded April 28, 1874, in Campbellsport, Wisconsin, by German immigrants Emma Franziska (Mother Alexia) Hoell, Paulina (Mother Alfons) Schmid, and Helena (Sister Clara) Seiter. Facing religious persecution under the German Empire, the women chose to leave their ten-member community in Schwarzach, where they had ministered at an orphanage.

When they arrived in Wisconsin, the three foundresses took vows to establish a new, Franciscan religious community of women to care for people in need. Their first missions were to staff Catholic schools and teach the children of newly arrived immigrant families.

“We are grateful for so many years, filled with so many blessings,” said Sister Deborah Fumagalli, President of the School Sisters of St. Francis, in her welcome message to the more than 300 people in attendance at the Mass. She noted that the foundresses showed remarkable courage in following their religious vocation.

“They arrived in America without knowing the English language, or even their destination,” Sister Deborah noted. “But they put their faith and trust in God. Thousands of women responded to our foundresses’ invitation. They ministered in places as familiar as Earling, Iowa, and Chicago, Illinois, and as far away as the Caroline Islands and China’s Shantung Province.”

Sister Deborah pointed out the many obstacles and challenges the congregation has navigated in the past century and a half, including world wars, multiple pandemics, and enormous changes in the life of the Catholic Church.

A procession of sisters at the end of the anniversary Mass.





(Above) Sister Deborah Fumagalli welcomes sisters, associates, and guests to the anniversary liturgy. (Right) Sisters perform the Arathi Ceremony



"At each step in our congregation's history, the Holy Spirit has inspired and challenged our sisters to discern the will of God in the needs of the times in order to create just and humane societies as witnesses to God's love," she said. "Today we serve in Honduras, Mexico, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Peru, the United States, Germany, Switzerland, India, and Tanzania. How blessed we are to gather in this place and give thanks for so much sacred service, made possible by our foundresses' dreams and prayers."

In his homily, Archbishop ListECKi noted that a bishop in Germany described one of the foundresses as having "a shameless confidence in God."

"Was he trying to criticize her? It's a tremendous compliment!" he laughed. "You couldn't ask for anything better than a total surrender to God, and you see, in her confidence in God, what has been created. Her life was already reflecting that great sense of unity with God, and that would permeate everything that would be done: the schools, the caring for the poor, the hospitals, in different places throughout the whole world."

Sisters from all five of the congregation's worldwide provinces and regions participated in the liturgy in the processions, readings, prayers of the faithful, presentation of the gifts,

and music. Indian sisters also participated in an "Arathi" ceremony at the conclusion of the Eucharistic Prayer to symbolize the offering of the whole world, and of each individual, to be in union with Christ's Body and Blood. A candle, incense, and flowers were used to express this prayer of adoration to God.

The importance of liturgical music to the life of the congregation was evident throughout the Mass. At the start of the liturgy, the Chapel Singers led the congregation in the singing of a litany to the Holy Spirit that was composed by Milwaukee liturgical musician Jeffrey Honore especially for the congregation's sesquicentennial. Sister Theophane Hytrek's "Canticle of the Creatures" was sung by the Chapel Singers at the closing of the Mass, and Sister Mary Jane Wagner, the Director of Music Ministry, performed Sister Mary Hueller's "Tribute" as an organ solo postlude.

Following the liturgy, the community welcomed everyone in attendance to a festive reception. It was a fitting conclusion to a joyous celebration 150 years in the making.

The Harvest is Abundant

Improvements at Assisi Farm have yielded plentiful results

If you are seeking the beauty and abundance of God's creation, Assisi Farm in Walayar is a shining example. Stretching over 36 acres near the Indian state of Tamil Nadu's border with Kerala, the farm's cultivation efforts provide financial support for our sisters' St. Joseph Convent and wages for the laborers who work at the farm.

The sales of the farm's produce also make possible the medical care provided at the nearby Assisi Clinic and support the teaching ministry at Assisi Nursery School. Clearly, the sisters' stewardship of this land is providing a rich harvest of livelihood and wellness for hundreds of people.

The farm's most important source of income is coconut plants, but the sisters also grow other fruits like guava, papaya, zapota, avocado, mango, and jackfruit. Vegetables include tomatoes, bitter gourd, and eggplant. The farm is also home to livestock that include buffaloes, goats, chickens, and rabbits.

Sister Tessy George Mundankavil works full time at the farm, overseeing the planning, planting, scheduling of workers, and making sure the farm is secure and well maintained. She arrives at the farm by 8:30 a.m. and stays until 5:00 p.m., commuting to and from St. Joseph Convent (crossing the state boundary from Kerala to do so). At the convent, all the sisters in residence participate in daily prayer and meditation, tending to their own spiritual well-being as well as the farm's.

The work the sisters do at Assisi Farm has enriched their lives and allowed them to live out the spirituality of our patron, St. Francis.

"The farm is a wonderful place to cultivate a deep spiritual connection," said Sister Rosebell



Sister Tessy George supervises activities throughout Assisi Farm's 36 acres.

Ponthakkan, who assists on the farm. "Being surrounded by fields, forests, and creatures fosters a sense of awe and appreciation for the natural world.

"As Franciscans, we are blessed with this ministry to be in connection with nature, serene and peaceful," Sister Rosebell continued. "It allows a deep look into life, for simplicity and mindfulness of work. Ultimately, my spiritual life on the farm is about finding what connects me to something larger than myself. It's about appreciating the beauty and bounty of nature, living mindfully, and feeling a sense of purpose in my work."

Challenging and Rewarding

Life on the farm is beautiful, but it is not easy. Coconut trees require a lot of water, and Tamil

Nadu's climate makes it difficult to grow them in times of drought. Once the monsoon season ends, the farm cannot rely on rain as a large enough water source.

Thanks to generous donor support, the sisters have been working to promote healthy growth year-round. A bore well was installed to ensure that the coconut trees can get enough water during the dry months. Without the water pumped from this well, the trees would have dried out and stopped producing fruit, especially during the brutally hot 100-degree days.

"After drilling the bore well, we have reliable source of water for irrigation," Sister Rosebell said. "It's essential for the growth and productivity of our crops, and it has increased the crop yield."

Another challenge at Assisi Farm is nighttime intrusion from wild animals, including deer, wild pigs, and even elephants, who devour and destroy vegetation. In response, the sisters recently completed construction of a solar-powered fence to discourage wild animals from wandering onto the farm at night when there are fewer workers present.

"Having the solar fencing security walls around the perimeter of our farm has improved the

security of our farm," Sister Rosebell said. "It protects our crops and livestock from wild and stray animals, and also makes it safer for the staff who are on the farm at night."

Sister Rosebell expressed her gratitude to all; those who have contributed to the success of Assisi Farm. "There has been significant progress in the productivity of the crops and fewer wild animal attacks, too. Your donations have made a real difference in the lives of those who work on our farm, and the community we serve."

The sisters are considering additional projects to boost productivity and improve life on the farm even more. Since the solar fence is only activated at night, the installation of a side-by-side compound wall is being considered to protect the farm around the clock. A second bore well is also being considered to make sure there is adequate water to ensure healthy crops during dry spells.

"Your gifts are powerful tools for the progress of our farm," Sister Rosebell said. "Every sprout will echo the sound of gratitude; every breeze says we are connected in prayer. Every drop of water fills with thankfulness that we are one. We hold you, your family members, and your special intentions in our continued prayers. We appreciate your compassion and commitment to a noble cause."





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Remembering Our Own Flying Nun

Sister Mary Catherine Martini (1934-2022) touched thousands of lives during her half century of teaching ministry at Aurora Central Catholic High School in Illinois. Whether Sister was moderating the school's pom-pom squad, leading the ski club, or shepherding teen groups to Canada with the Voyageur Wilderness Programme, she lived her vocation with a sense of adventure and inspired her students to the same.

In 1967, Sister Mary Catherine began taking flying lessons, a hobby she embraced for two years. According to the pilot's logbook she passed on to our Archives, Sister logged more than 57 hours of flight time, including more than six hours of solo flying. She managed to make time for this pursuit while she was teaching fulltime and earning the first of her two master's degrees!



PHOTOS: SSSF ARCHIVES

Sister also loved high-flying adventures closer to the ground, as evidenced by the second photo (Sister Mary Catherine is on the right), taken with another sister at a Chicago-area amusement park!

The heavens are telling the glory of God, and all creation is shouting for joy!

(Canticle of the Sun, Marty Haugen)