

Staying Connected

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Sisters of St. Francis
of Mary Immaculate

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

BY SARA TEASDALE

The kings they came from out the south,
All dressed in ermine fine;
They bore Him gold and chrysoprase,
And gifts of precious wine.

The shepherds came from out the north,
Their coats were brown and old;
They brought Him little new-born lambs —
They had not any gold.

The wise men came from out the east,
And they were wrapped in white;
The star that led them all the way
Did glorify the night.

The angels came from heaven high,
And they were clad with wings;
And lo, they brought a joyful song
The host of heaven sings.

The kings they knocked upon the door,
The wise men entered in,
The shepherds followed after them
To hear the song begin.

The angels sang all through the night
Until the rising sun,
But little Jesus fell asleep
Before the song was done.



Message from JPIC

By Theresa Fifer, OSF



International Friendships: Heart to Heart

As sisters and associates we are caring people and as so, we can become overwhelmed with all the needs of our world. We see the suffering of people around the world who have lost their homes and lands because of the effects of climate change—droughts and flooding. We see the terrible effects of war and violence on our brothers and sisters in places like Ukraine, Gaza, Israel, Lebanon, and Sudan. What can we do? We do what we can, and we pray.

I am blessed to be with international women at our ESL school where I have become friends with families who have fled war and violence and have found safe harbor here in the U.S. with us. This last Sunday I spent the afternoon with my friend Mawahib and her family who emigrated from Sudan. We had a delicious Sudanese dinner prepared by Mowahib and her two older daughters.

After dinner we had coffee and the conversation turned to the current situation in Sudan where two warlords and their militias are fighting for power and control of the country. In her home village of 200 people, thirty people were killed by marauding militia. The families in this village are all related to one another and have lived together for generations. As she said, “We are all cousins!” All this time I listened to her, I thought, “Thank God they had the courage to leave their homeland and bring their children here where they are flourishing.”

We are at a crucial time in our history. We can insulate ourselves from all this suffering or we can do what we can by speaking out for our international brothers and sisters, by welcoming those who have come to us for shelter, we can

write to our lawmakers to lobby for fair and respectful treatment of immigrants and refugees, and we can embrace our



Ministry of Prayer. Most of us can't do the busy work we used to do, but we can bring our own suffering and offer it in prayer for peace and the well-being of all those who have lost so much. As one of my Muslim students said, “There is only one God and when we pray, we all pray to the same God.”

Grateful Associates Gather in Thanksgiving

Submitted by Associate Sheila Greuel

The Effingham group of Associates gathered at Sr. Sandra Sudkamp's home for an evening of prayer and community on November 13, 2024. What a blessing for Eileen Hartke, MaryJo Orme, Wendy Cavalier, Sr. Sandra Sudkamp, Louise Johnson, Connie Blackwell, Sheila Greuel and Donna Aye to gather to pray a Thanksgiving prayer service, share our lives, hopes, concerns and joys! We sang, prayed, laughed, and visited with each other with such joyful hearts. Our group discussed the possibility of gathering in December to share some Advent Hope. Time will tell if it comes to fruition as several are anticipating surgery in December. Whether we are gathered or apart, our hearts are joined in Franciscan prayer and joy. May God Bless you all in this holy time of year!

Special Encounter in Rome

As part of completing her license in canon law to work in the marriage tribunal in the Archdiocese of Goiânia, Sister Rita Cristina Lima dos Santos attended a conference in Rome with her cohort of canon law students. She invited Sr. Neli Vieira dos Santos to join her for some of the experience. One very special opportunity is captured in these photos during an audience with Pope Francis. We think he is also very happy to meet them as well!



Joint Franciscans Joliet/Frankfort



Submitted: Associate Therese Griffin

#WearBlueDay: January 11



**Human trafficking affects
millions across the globe.**

**[https://www.dhs.gov/blue-campaign/
wearblueday#](https://www.dhs.gov/blue-campaign/wearblueday#)**

National Human Trafficking Awareness Day is recognized each year on January 11. In recognition of this important day, and throughout the month of January, Blue Campaign hosts several special events and educational activities, the largest being #WearBlueDay on January 11.

On this day, Blue Campaign invites the public to take photos of themselves, friends, family, and colleagues wearing blue clothing and share them on social media with the hashtag #WearBlueDay. Anyone can participate, all you need is a piece of blue clothing! Navigate the items below to learn more and get inspired.

Play a role to help end trafficking. Follow: @DHSBlueCampaign on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram for more information about #WearBlueDay and Campaign efforts throughout the year.

Report Suspected Human Trafficking:

1-866-347-2423

**Get Help from the National Human
Trafficking Hotline: 1-888-373-7888**

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

DHS.gov/Blue-Campaign

Let's be part of the solution – Wear Blue

Indicators of Human Trafficking

Recognizing key indicators of human trafficking is the first step in identifying victims and can help save a life. Here are some common indicators to help recognize human trafficking. You can also download or order the Blue Campaign indicator card, which is a small plastic card that lists common signs of trafficking and how to report the crime.

- Does the person appear disconnected from family, friends, community organizations, or houses of worship?
- Has a child stopped attending school?
- Has the person had a sudden or dramatic change in behavior?
- Is a juvenile engaged in commercial sex acts?
- Is the person disoriented or confused, or showing signs of mental or physical abuse?
- Does the person have bruises in various stages of healing?
- Is the person fearful, timid, or submissive?
- Does the person show signs of having been denied food, water, sleep, or medical care?
- Is the person often in the company of someone to whom he or she defers? Or someone who seems to be in control of the situation, e.g., where they go or who they talk to?
- Does the person appear to be coached on what to say?
- Is the person living in unsuitable conditions?
- Does the person lack personal possessions and appear not to have a stable living situation?
- Does the person have freedom of movement? Can the person freely leave where they live? Are there unreasonable security measures?

Not all indicators listed above are present in every human trafficking situation, and the presence or absence of any of the indicators is not necessarily proof of human trafficking.

*Can You Identify These
Mystery Sisters?*



Answers on page 8

December 18 — National Twin Day

On December 18th, National Twin Day celebrates all the siblings who enjoy the unique connection because they share a birthday. Whether fraternal or identical, twins share everything right from the beginning. While their personalities may be different, they often know what the other is going to say before the words are spoken. Distance isn't an issue either. Twins manage to stay connected across the country or around the globe.

Of course, mythology teaches us about twins from the very beginning, as does the Bible. From the rivalry of Esau and Jacob to Aphrodite's twin sons Phobos and Deimos as well as the mortal and immortal twins of the constellation, Gemini, we explore a host of human conditions.

Notable Twins

Through the years, we've been fascinated by twins, too. Literature embraced the twin duplicity with enthusiasm. Take Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, for example, and the confusion that ensues with Sebastian and Viola. Even modern-day sitcoms keep us in tears when twins are portrayed. Phoebe Buffay of the sitcom *Friends* and, more recently, Sheldon Cooper from *The Big Bang Theory* humorously depicted their twin lives.

But real-life twins intrigue us, too. When twins move into the White House, we are sure to pay attention, as was the case with Barbara and Jenna Bush in 2001. Of course, when they play magical characters like James and Oliver Phelps did in the Harry Potter series, we feel like they're family. Their roles as Fred and George Weasley kept us coming back for more. Some twins have the same interests. For example, Mark and Scott Kelly both became

astronauts and have contributed not only to space exploration but also to scientific study. Twins Jocelyne Lamoureux-Davidson and Monique Lamoureux's love of hockey brought them together on the U.S. Olympic Hockey Team.

HOW TO OBSERVE NATIONAL TWIN DAY

Give a shout-out to your favorite twins. Whether they are friends, family, or famous ones, let them know you're thinking of them. If you're a twin, tell your best twin memory. Share photos.

Twin FAQ

Q. What's the difference between identical and fraternal twins?

A. Identical twins develop from a single fertilized egg while fraternal twins develop from two separate fertilized eggs.

Q. How many sets of twins are born each year?

A. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) twins comprise approximately 3.4% of the population.

Q. Is it possible for twins to have different birthdays?

A. Yes. The most common reason for twins having different birthdays is due to one twin being born before midnight and the other after midnight. However, sometimes twins are born days, weeks, or months apart. One reason for this may be due to multiple births being high risk and while one twin is delivered early, the other remains in the womb for the rest of the gestation or as long as possible for development.

<https://www.nationaldaycalendar.com/national-day/national-twin-day-december-18>

See twin pictures on page 7



Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen



Michael and Ashton Kutcher



Sisters Mark and Luke Livingston



Jenna and Barbara Bush



Scarlett and Hunter Johansson

Recipe Corner:

Cookie Brittle

(Quick and Easy Variation of Chocolate Chip Cookies!)



Ingredients:

1 c. (2 sticks) unsalted butter, melted, cooled
 1 c. (215 g.) packed light brown sugar
 1 tsp. pure vanilla extract
 2 c. (240 g.) all-purpose flour
 1/2 tsp. kosher salt
 1/2 c. semisweet chocolate chips

Directions

Step 1: Preheat oven to 350°. In a large bowl, whisk butter, brown sugar, and vanilla until combined. Add flour and salt and stir with a wooden spoon to combine. Stir in chocolate chips.

Step 2: Spread dough on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Pat into a thin, even layer with your hands (the dough may not go all the way to the edge).

Step 3: Bake brittle until golden brown all over, 18 to 20 minutes. Let cool, then break into pieces.

*LCWR Living Into Our
 Emerging Future: Part Two
 is available now!*

Click on <https://www.lcwr.org/resources/living-into-our-emerging-future>
 Then click on [Module Two: What Do We See Ahead?](#) for resource materials.

Answers to Mystery Sisters

Top Picture

Front Row:

Rita Vahling
 Rosaire Schlueb
 Rose Marie Surwilo

Back Row:

Jeanne Bessette
 Sue Bruno
 Rita Travis
 Patty Kirk
 Elaine Kerscher
 Jo Giarrante

Bottom Picture

L to R

Jo Giarrante
 Rita Travis
 Marie DeLourdes
 Fitzer
 Sue Bruno
 Jeanne Bessette



Facebook Prayer Authors

December	Associate Dorothy Nesbit
January	Karen Garifo
February	Sister Karen Berry
March	Sister Marianne Saieg

Staying Connected

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If you would like to submit an item for *Staying Connected*, or if something you have requested to be published is inadvertently omitted, please e-mail Sister René Simonelic at rsimonelic@jolietfranciscans.org or Renée Cipriani at rcipriani@jolietfranciscans.org